ISSUE 39 • DECEMBER 1990

ACE

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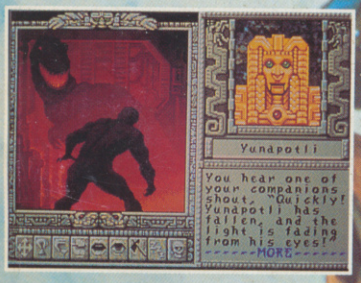
ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT



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Reviewed: Latest blockbuster using Ultima VI gamesystem

THE AXEMAN COMETH

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Complete Gameboy guide... The software, the specs, the full story

TIMEWARP!

The Ultimate Games Experience is coming...

...AND I'LL BE SEEING YOU ON PAGE 39

GAMEBOY GIVEAWAY

£3500 worth of Gameboys up for grabs!

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COVERT ACTION, GREMLINS 2, WRATH OF THE DEMON, RANX, SHOCKWAVE...

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YOU DISCOVER THE SURREAL TRUTH -

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YOU'RE ME

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YOUR MISSION IS NOW
STOP ACTION, STRANGE
VEHICLES AND A STARTLING
CAPTURED IN SUPERBLY
ANDA GAME PLAY THAT
SUCCESS OF THE

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"My centre is giving way, my right is in retreat; situation excellent. I shall attack."

Message from Marshal Foch to Joffre, 1914

Quoted in Emmanuel Strikneen's 'Famous Last Words', Snork and Snookums, 2005

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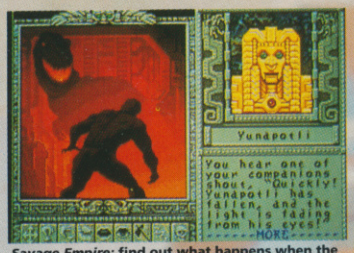
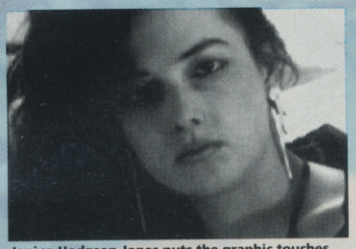
reviews

The latest releases on computer, console and CD are all given the authoritative ACE treatment...



Savage Empire: **find out what happens when the natives get *Ultima VI* gameplay on page 48**

Shockwave: **tremendous gameplay, tremendous spiret-based 3D routines and more on page 91**



Janine Hodgson-Jones puts the graphic touches to Matthew Stibbe's *'Nam* on page 43

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111 **LIVING BOOKS** *CDTV*

BOTTOMS UP!

Next month's issue is going to be so hot we just had to let you into a few of its secrets ahead of schedule. For a start, we've got a hilarious report from the US Gold conference, when ACE readers gathered in Birmingham and were greeted by...well, words fail us. The picture on the right should give you a hint of what to expect. Then we've got a red hot on-the-spot report from the Intertainment '90 conference in New York – a stunning expose of the future of interactive television, games, and on-line technology. If you're serious about gaming, then it's an issue you just mustn't miss.

Just one of the obscenities in next month's issue. Colonel Parkerton of Titmuss-on-Sea, you have been warned.

On the gameplay front, we'll be covering more games than ever before as well as providing in-depth hardware and software buyers' guides for the Christmas season – so if you're out for a game, a console, or a computer make sure you check with us first. There'll also be news of the next ACE conference (and how you can join us), a special 8-bit Christmas games guide, major 16-bit entertainment exclusives, and a huge quiz for games trivia fans with bags of prizes!

All that AND a Christmas freebie! ACE is really going to kick ass on its fortieth issue so don't monkey around: reserve *your* copy *now* on page 178!

Could this machine be the next big thing in British console gaming? After the success of the Master System and the Megadrive, ACE tests out the Sega handheld on page 8

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The publishers of ACE Magazine recognise that the contents of this issue may prove offensive, or even harmful, to certain people. Those of you who think that handheld gaming is a vicious, destructive habit may be disturbed by our intensive gametesting of the Sega Gamegear on page 8. You may also be appalled by our irresponsible distribution of 50 free Game Boys on page 25. Narrow minded bigots who insist that time travel is not possible will be outraged by our Gamesworld feature on page 19, and failed comic strip artists may conceivably shoot themselves at the sight of pages 38, 39 or 53. You have been warned. The rest of us can relax and have a stonking good read...

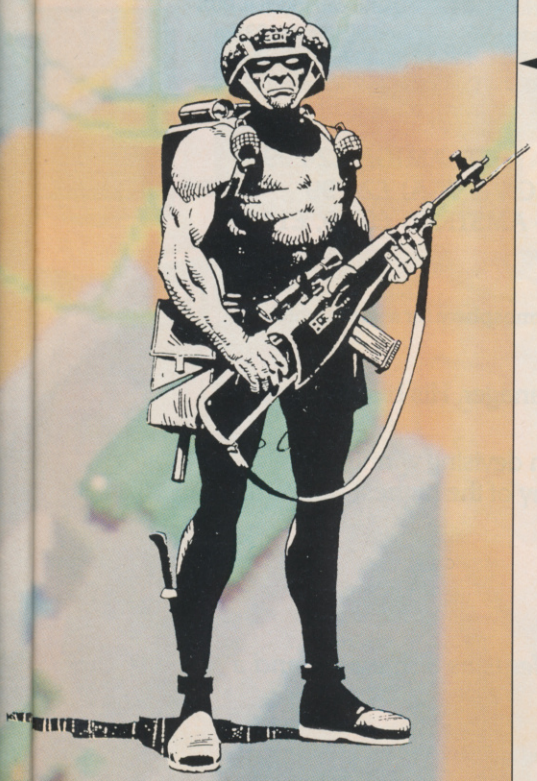
contents

GOLDEN AXE

The conversion of the year? Find out on pages 30/31.

0898 AND OVERSEAS

Don't forget: as promised last month, the contents of the 0898 numbers for the £10000 software scratchcards are printed in this issue – and there's still time to claim your prize or discount. See page 26.



The face of the future. Face it on pages 19-21 in our timewarped feature about Gamesworld 1999.

ROGUE LOADS AND RUNS

...and so do Judge Dredd, Ranx Xerox, Hagar the Horrible, and Spiderman in the latest glut of comic-inspired scenarios. ACE takes a look at silicon strip art and wonders whether hot strips make for hot games on page 38.

ACE

DECEMBER 1990

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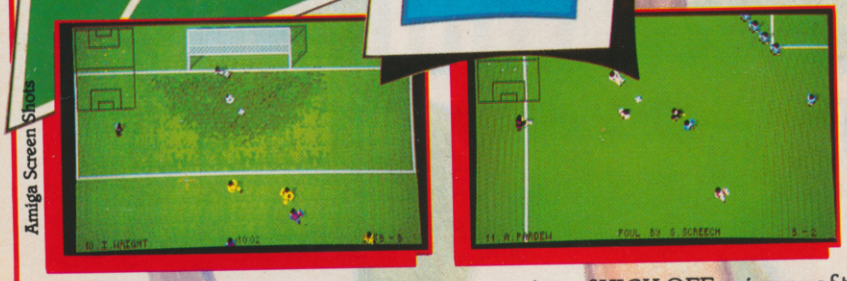
Adventureline...diary...crossword...mail order...competition winners...check out the ***full index*** on page 125.

KICK OFF 2

A NEW DI E
SOCCER SI



- BLISTERING PACE
- PIXEL PERFECT PASSING
- SUPERB TACTICAL GAMEPLAY

KICK OFF 2 greatly enhances the gameplay of KICK OFF, winner of the THE GAME OF THE YEAR in the U.K., and similar awards right across Europe. A host of new features have been added to the ones that enthralled players the world over.

* **Full size multi-directional scrolling pitch with the players, markings etc. in correct proportion.**
* **1 to 4 players option. (Amiga and ST only)**
* **2 players TEAM option against the computer or 2 other players. Hundreds of players each with a unique combination of attributes (stamina, pace, etc.) and skills (passing, shooting, tackling, etc.)**
* **Instinctive Kick Off joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot, head or chip the ball and do sliding tackles.**
* **Set piece. FREE KICKS including dummies and the ability to dip the ball or bend the ball round a defensive wall.**
* **9 types of corner kicks with full control of shot power. Long and short throw ins.**
* **Team selection from a squad of 16 with substitution and a choice of tactics.**
* **League and cup competitions with Extra Time, Injury Time and sudden death penalty shoot outs.**
* **Facility to view, edit and save the Action Replays and create a Golden Shots disc.(Excl. IBM & CBM 64)**
* **Facility to load Player Manager teams and tactics for a single or league game.**
* **Red and yellow cards, 16 different referees, injury time and a host of features to create an atmosphere for a game which is real fun to play.**

ST ACTION - The best game ever to grace the ST. Highest accolade I can give.
AMIGA USER INT - The best computer game ever **97%**
THE ONE - Ultimate soccer simulation. **96%**
THE ACE - Brilliant. Buy, Buy, Buy. **930.**
AMIGA FORMAT - Best footy game to have appeared on any machine. **94%**
ST FORMAT - What a game! Gem to play. Magic. **90%**
C & VG - Championship winning material. **95%**
GAMES MACHINE - Probably the best sports game ever. **92%**
COMMODORE USER - No other footie game can touch it. **90%**
AMIGA ACTION - Surpasses all other football games. **93%**
POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY - Nothing short of brilliant.
NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - Computer football event of the year.

AMIGA & ST £19.99 EXP. AMIGA £24.99
IBM (AT & XT Turbo, EGA & VGA) £24.99
CBM 64 - SPECTRUM - AMSTRAD £9.99, £14.99

An International class player takes charge of a third division club as Player Manager. His brief is simple **-Bring Back The Glory Days.**

His success depends on his playing skills on the pitch and managerial skills in devising winning tactics, aquiring the right players from the transfer market and building a team worthy of the highest honours.

* **Unique facility to design and implement your own tactics.**
* **Over 1000 individual players, each with a unique combination of attributes and skills.**
* **A lively transfer market. Haggle for the best deal.**
* **4 division league and a cup tournament with sudden death penalty shoot out.**

The Player Manager brings the every day realities of a manager's life, his talents as a manager and a player, his triumphs and his failures into a sharp FOCUS.

ST. ACTION - A stroke of pure genius.
THE ONE - An exceptional football management simulation, Astounding depth. Most involved, rewarding and playable.
THE ACE - Successfully blends challenging soccer management with frantic end to end arcade action. **920**
NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - The sheer depth is incredible. A definitive management game.
COMMODORE USER - At last a management game that requires true management skills - a winner. **94%**
ST FORMAT - Brilliant. **93%**
AMIGA FORMAT - Enthralling and addictive. **93%**
ZZAP - Best football management game ever written. **92%**

AMIGA - ST £19.99

IENSION IN MULATIONS

THE FINAL WHISTLE
Amiga - ST £12.99 (Rel. Nov.)

Raises the skills required and gameplay of KICK OFF 2 to new heights.

Two extra kits.
Look at any player stats. (attributes and skill) before selecting squad.

Totally new corner kicks with full control of the power, height and trajectory of the ball.

Enhanced throw ins and penalty shots.

Provision to flick the ball in the air and do a blinding header or a spectacular overhead kick.

New two players team mode. Player 1 in position or nearest to the ball and player 2 in position or keeper.

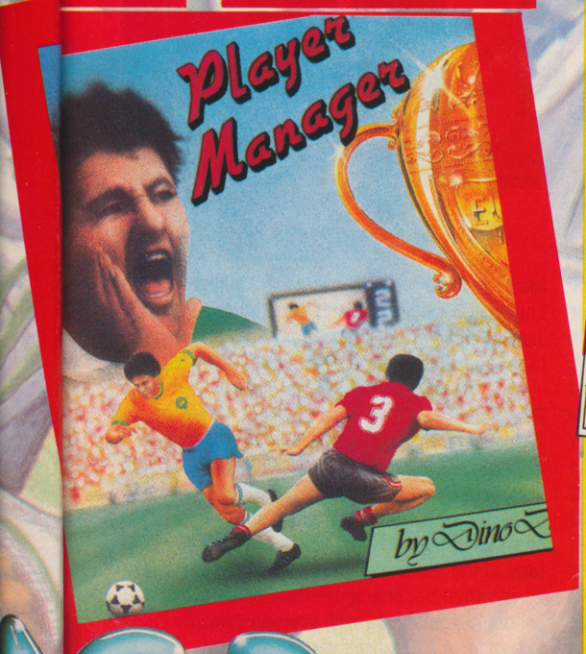
Linesmen and referee on the pitch.

A new player attribute FLAIR. A player with a high level of flair will try a solo attempt at the goal.

4 new pitches - Wembley - Icy - Muddy - Non-League

And Lot's More

WINNING TACTICS (£6.99 - Rel. Nov.) - A collection of tactics for use in Player Manager or KO2 with full explanations.
RETURN TO EUROPE (£9.99 - Rel. Dec.) - Three European cup competitions. UEFA cup - European Cup - Cup Winners Cup.
GIANTS OF EUROPE (Rel. 1991) Best teams of Europe on one disc.



Draft specifications. Subject to changes without notice

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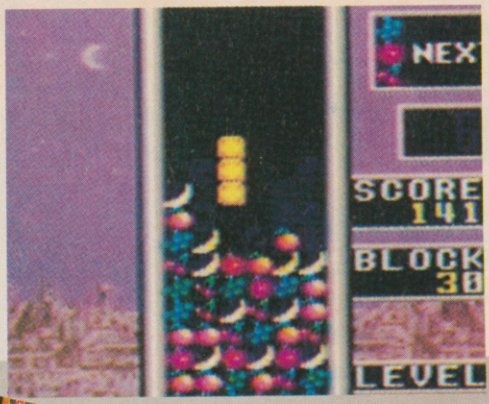
It's that girl again! Mel Costin models the latest accessory for the hi-tech, mobile gamesplayer who wants it all in colour.

COLUMNS, a colourful update on the Tetris style of arcade puzzle games.



The Sega Game Gear colour handheld console... 4096 colours, four-channels of sound, optional TV tuner and it only costs £79 (in Japan)!

PALM

Japanese console companies are putting a lot of faith into the 'Walkman' theory of portable electronic entertainment. If you visit your local electro-gadgeteer in downtown Tokyo you can buy a Nintendo Gameboy, Atari Lynx, NEC PC Engine GT (Turbo-Express), and now a Sega Game Gear... the latest addition to the team of handheld consoles. So how does it compare to the portable competition?

The Sega Game Gear is a sleek black console with the now classic handheld top-design of screen, joypad, two fire buttons and a start key. Its size and weight is pitched between the Gameboy and the Lynx. Game Gear weighs a reasonable 570g and is a little larger than a VHS video-cassette. It has a similar internal architecture to the Sega's 8-bit Master System deck, but cannot use any Master game cartridges.

Six AA-size batteries provide you with a 3.2" backlit colour LCD screen at a resolution of 480x146 with 16 on-screen colours out of a palette of 4096. A loud internal speaker blasts out three PSG stereo-sound channels (plus a noise generator) . If you don't want to annoy your fellow communters you can connect 'Walkman' headphones. You plug your game cartridges into a slot in the top-back of the console.

Game Gear has a wealth of optional accessories including a TV tuner, link-up lead to let two Game Gear owners to play head-to-head games, and various power supply options such as 9V DC mains-adaptor and a cable which allows you to power the Game Gear using a car cigarette-lighter.

But the most impressive feature of the new Sega machine is its very low price. You can pick-up a Game Gear in Japan for only 19800 yen (£79). This compares to the official UK prices of £69.99 for the monochrome Gameboy, with the Lynx coming in at a hefty £179.99. And let's not forget the 'Rolls-Royce' of handhelds, the PC Engine GT costing the equivalent of £250 in Japan! Already the Game Gear has a clear advantage, but what about the software?

PLAY THE GAMES

There are three games available for the Game Gear at present. Prices are in the region of 3500 yen (£14) per games cart. *Pengo* is a conversion of the ancient Sega coin-op, while *Columns* is a more up-to-date coin-op adaption taking advantage of the current craze for arcade puzzle games (fast becoming the defacto standard for handheld games). In fact, you can think of *Columns* as a colourful version of *Tetris*.

Super Monaco GP is the most impressive title of the three. This fast *Pole-Position* style racing-sim is full of extra features like a multitude of

GAME GEAR SPECS

SCREEN: 3.2" backlit LCD
RESOLUTION: 480x146
COLOURS: 16 colours on-screen out of a palette of 4096
SOUND: 3 stereo-sound channels (PSG) and noise.
SIZE: 103x210x38mm
WEIGHT: 570g
PORTS: Walkman headphone socket, 9V DC power socket, external 'expansion' socket
CONTROLS: eight-directional joypad, two fire buttons, volume/brightness controllers
POWER: six AA batteries (or 9V DC mains-supply)
PRICE: 19800 yen (£79)
GAMES OUT NOW: Super Monaco GP, Columns, Pengo
GAMES OUT SOON: Wonderboy, G-Loc, Pro-Baseball '90, Dragon Crystal
AVERAGE GAME PRICE: 3500 yen (£14)
OPTIONAL EXTRAs: TV tuner, link-up cable so two Game Gear owners can play head-to-head games, output lead with two stereo 'phono' sockets, mains power supply, car cigarette-lighter power lead.

One of the attractive 'splash' screens from WONDERBOY. The Game Gear is very similar to the Sega Master System... only it's fully portable (he, he).

SUPER MONACO GP: probably the best game available on the Game Gear at the moment.

It will interesting to see how G-LOC converts over to the Game Gear... it's not looking that hot from this screen-shot.

PENGO hits the Game Gear.

ACE EXCLUSIVE

Sega has just launched a colour handheld console in Japan costing a mere £79! Is the end in sight for the Lynx and Gameboy? Rik Haynes grabs the first look at the GAME GEAR...

POWER

Grand Prix circuits to race-in and the chance to customise your racing car with different wings, engines and tires.

That's not all. *Wonderboy*, *Pro-Baseball '90*, *Dragon Crystal* and even *G-Loc* will be released on the Game Gear in the coming months.

GETTING INTO GEAR

The future looks very bright for the Game Gear. Software supply should not be a problem. Sega is one of the top Japanese games companies with a string of classic coin-ops already under its belt. We could soon be playing Game Gear versions of *Space Harrier*, *Out Run*, *Afterburner*, *Thunderblade*, *Powderdrift* and *Galaxy Force II*.

And don't forget all the Japanese, American and European third-party software houses that Sega has signed up to produce games on the Master and Megadrive. So will they be developing Game Gear titles as well?

Geoff Brown, boss of US Gold, was most enthusiastic about the new Sega baby. It seems likely that the Master versions of *Paperboy*, *Gauntlet*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade - the Arcade Game*, and *Impossible Mission* will be converted over to the Game Gear. "We also have the opportunity to develop other titles in the future," added Brown. Meanwhile, Gary Bracey at Ocean told us they have no plans to develop Game Gear titles at present. Though he did manage to mention the fact that *Robocop* is nearly finished on the Gameboy and looking very good.

Mirrorsoft's boss Peter Bilotta was very secretive about the whole subject of Sega's Game Gear, repeatedly saying he was bound by a non-disclosure agreement. Does this mean we'll shortly be playing Game Gear versions of *Xenon II*, *Back to the Future Part II* and *Speedball*?

I'D BUY THAT FOR A DOLLAR

Nick Alexander, boss of Virgin/Mastertronic – the official UK distributor of the Sega Master and Megadrive, was pretty non-committal on the official UK launch of the Sega Game Gear. "There's no firm release date but we're hoping for early next year," confirmed Alexander. And what about the price? "We'd love it to be under £100 – we just don't know at the moment."

In the meantime, you can bet the grey-importers will be buying up huge stocks of what must be the best value handheld console in the world.

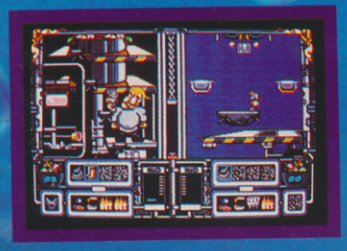
Soon you'll be able to play WONDERBOY on the Game Gear.

Special thanks to ACTIVE CONSOLES on 081 752 0260 for supplying the Sega Game Gear and games.

Flip-it & Magnose

EXCITEMENT ON TAP!

In **FLIP-IT & MAGNOSE**, two players can compete head-to-head on their mission across six action packed levels thanks to an innovative split-screen display. The question is – **WHO WILL RETURN AS CHAMPION OF MARS?**



Screen shots: ATARI ST version

TWO CAN PLAY AT THIS GAME! THE PLANET MARS IS RUNNING OUT OF WATER – AND ONLY YOU CAN SAVE IT . . . In a last ditch attempt to save the drought-stricken Red Planet, its two top agents, FLIP-IT & MAGNOSE, have been sent to Earth to collect enough water to save their planet. Sounds simple? Don't you believe it!

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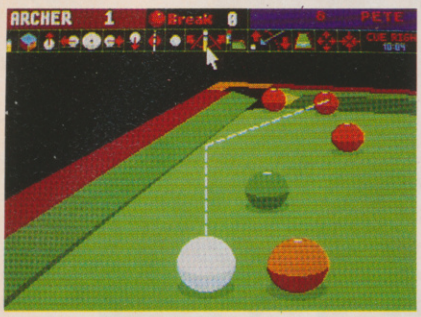
ALL CUED UP

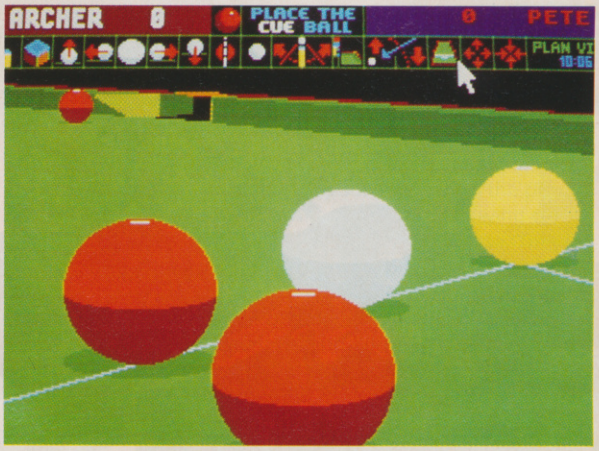


At 25 frames per second, Archer Maclean's new Snooker-sim is even faster than Jimmy White on fast forward.

Archer Maclean, the veteran programmer of the classic games Dropzone and IK+, has now turned his attention to the 'mundane' sport of Snooker... and produced one of the most stunning micro simulations the ACE team has ever played.

The lively programmer is putting the finishing touches to his yet unnamed Snooker game, which should be released within the next few months on 16-bit format by Virgin/Mastertronic.

Archer's new masterpiece incorporates some of the fastest 3D filled polygon graphics yet seen on an ST, with a very respectable screen rate of 25 frames per second. It also includes a multitude of play options, viewpoints and a handy 'undo' feature allowing you try out and perfect some nifty trick shots. Look out for a full review in a near future issue of ACE.



And for those of you reading in black and white... get your eyes fixed!

PLAY IT AGAIN, SID

Now you can relive the classic C64 music hits on your Amiga courtesy of a remarkable piece of public domain software.

Tears will stream from your eyes as you boot Your 100 Best Tunes from the Commodore 64 and listen to the sound effects and music tracks from such classics as Commando, Crazy Comets, Delta, Ghosts 'n' Goblins, Hypaball, International Karate, The Last Ninja, Master of Magic, Mutants, Parallax, Sanxion, Terra Cresta, Thing on a Spring, Trap and Warhawk – to name but the best.

Per Hakan and Ron Birk have managed to simulate the infamous SID – the C64's custom sound chip – on the Amiga. And they claim to have achieved this amazing feat in a mere six weeks. There's only one thing missing from the list, there's no sign of Wizball! This is an outrageous omission – Martin Galway's work on Wizball was undoubtedly the best audio heard on any C64 game.

Many thanks to LM Software of 1 Queens Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex for supplying this essential £2.99 Amiga program. What are your favourite game tunes and sound effects? Why? Send your top ten tracks to ACE Letters, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

DIAL 0898 555563 NOW!

ACE on the line

The ACE Interactive Newsline is the only way to get a weekly update on the latest games gossip, future games technology and games currently under development. You can also win special prizes. The ACE Newsline is updated every Wednesday afternoon. Calls cost 44p per minute (standard), 33p per minute (off-peak). You're just a phone-call away from the future...

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids Movie Set Adventure is the latest attraction to the Disney-MGM Studios Theme Park in Florida, USA.

"This takes studios theme park guests into the lilliputian land of the 1989 Disney hit motion picture Honey, I Shrunk the Kids," says Disney, "Towering blades of grass reaching 30 feet in height, gargantuan backyard beasties and gigantic sprinkler heads all dwarf human-sized visitors."

All three Florida-based Walt Disney World theme parks are open daily throughout the year, with extended hours of operation during the summer and at other peak vacation times. General guest information about the Walt Disney resort is available by writing to: Guest Letters Department, PO Box 10040, Lake Buena Vista, Florida 32830-0040, USA – or by calling 0101 407 8244321.

Disney trivia: there are more than 11000 overnight accommodations throughout the Disney vacation kingdom.

Say hello to the Turtles and get shrunk to the size of a flea in Walt Disney World!

HE'S BACK... TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT

ROBOCOP 2

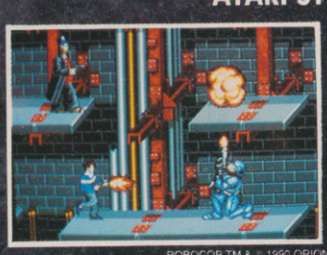
EVEN IN THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

The future is a rough place, Detroit is a bankrupt city... torn apart by the decadent forces of the Old Man and his corrupt corporation. If you want to die - then walk the streets, if you want to live - then pray for the return of **Robocop!**

Robocop 2 has justice in mind... a kind of justice only he can deliver! Take on Detroit's evil mastermind and his mega-corporation in some of the most action-packed scenes ever devised for maximum entertainment value.

Detroit is falling apart - it's time to put it all back together!

SPECTRUM AMSTRAD COMMODORE
ATARI ST CBM AMIGA



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Letters

Console aggro, computer aggro, adventure aggro, and a debate on economics....

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE!

First of all, I would like to say how much I think your mag has gone downhill, heading more towards consoles and endless speculation on CD technology. Why dedicate so much time to consoles? Don't you think that the market will soon (if it hasn't already) become overcrowded and people will not have a clue as to what to buy? I don't believe that all these computer, consoles and handhelds can possibly all live together. Consoles in particular seem to be aimed at the very people (the younger generation) who cannot afford to lay out £170 or so on a console, and then anything from £30-£50 for the software.

My guess is that in the next few months you will have forgotten about the Megadrive (for instance) and will be raving on about CD hardware (such as the Amiga), shortly followed by the latest hi-tech gadget you think we should buy. Perhaps you should realise that most of your readers do not have an endless supply of cash and a desire to change their machines every six months. You may as well rename your mag Advanced Console Entertainment! This may seem harsh criticism, but while I welcome technological advancement I do not welcome unending hype. By all means report such things - but in moderation!

John Glover, Middlesex

Harsh words indeed Mr. Glover, and (in our opinion) quite unfounded. Taking your first point, we would disagree that too much space is being devoted to console and CD news. You yourself state that they are new technology and as you know, ACE is dedicated to bringing its audience news of such.

As for the price of consoles, we are inclined to agree, although the cost of hard/software is only relative to the U.K market. Japanese consumers pay around £130 for the Megadrive itself and £24 for cartridges. Granted, that may not be applicable to the U.K, but even here £170 for a 16-bit machine with arcade capabilities and £35 per title is considerably cheaper than any other such machine. As regards handhelds, (retailing at around the £70-£80 mark), they provide a cheaper alternative and all the playability a younger gameplayer could wish for.

As for forgetting current technology when the future comes around, take a look in ACE and you will find that we still cover the 8-bit machines that could long ago have been disregarded. Covering new technology does not necessarily mean that we are attempting to force readers into purchasing - just to advise and inform those who wish to know. Let's face it - who wants to live in the past?

THE WUMPUS IS DEAD...

I would like to offer a few thoughts on the subject of text adventures, as it seems that they are a dying breed.

A form of game similar to a book that actually lets the player take part in the story ought to have a lot going for it, yet the popularity of books and novels has always far outweighed that of adventures. The reason must be that the implementation of such games is all wrong.

For a start, text ought to be dynamic and captivate the readers attention. I am a great fan of just a few locations being initially accessible and progress being made via logical puzzle-solving, giving the player a sense of achievement and allowing the story to develop along a set course. There is nothing worse than being faced with dozens of locations and an inventory full of useless objects, right at the outset. It is very daunting and dilutes the plot. Progression is the keyword, and text-based games on today's machines could involve quite a journey. Puzzles should always be logical and never include the kind of ludicrous random element you see in today's adventures. About 90% of all adventures I have played, I've been stuck within about half an hour, no wonder nobody buys them anymore. I only hope that I haven't written a eulogy, but software houses should realise that text-based titles now have even greater potential.

Mr C.A Horsley, Birmingham

Your letter evoked a fit of nostalgia in our Editor, who got onto the 'phone to someone called The White Wizard and asked his opinion. It arrived the following day by gnome-drawn buggy...

Honourable Wizardling Horsley,
Greetings!

Although in retirement near the North Pole I was interested in the points in your letter and felt a reply was in order. Like you, I believe that the adventure format is far from dead, but simply suffering a temporary set back. The attractions of verbal puzzling and the power of the written word will certainly make a comeback.

But how? My feeling is that CD technology will make a huge contribution to adventuring. Remember that CD's can store the spoken word very efficiently. The big problem with traditional adventures was reading all that text on-screen. Now you'll be able to enter into adventures in an aural fashion, with the games presenting themselves much like interactive radio dramas with video screen graphics and powerful stereo sound effects.

This will happen because (a) the spoken word is cheaper than moving pictures and (b) good actors can work miracles with the right text. Stand by for the return of the Wizard! And the Pilgrim! Uncle Tom Cobbley! Anita Sinclair! Pete *(Contd p999)*

CONFUSION FUSION

Could you please tell me why when reviewing Megadrive games, prices in ACE are quoted as being £59.99? When readers see this I'm sure it must put them off buying the Megadrive. You only have to look at numerous ads to see that most suppliers charge around £30-£35. Perhaps that is why games get such low ratings. For £60 you would expect something outstanding. As it is, Megadrive games are outstanding anyway...
Graeme Silburn, Essex

The Megadrive titles we reviewed were received at a very advanced stage (although admittedly not reviewed for some time) – hence the £60 price tag. We are aware of mail-order firms offering cheaper prices and will be taking note in future. NB ACE reviews always concentrate on the gameplay – value for money is not included in ratings. We believe that only you know best how much you're prepared to pay for a game.

THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME

In your console special (Issue 36), you exhort all 16-bit computer owners who are "serious about games" to "seriously consider buying a console", implying that the way forward for Advanced Computer Entertainment lies with dedicated games machines such as the Megadrive. Do you seriously think that I and other Amiga (or PC/ST) owners are about to abandon the versatility and capabilities of our computers, for the limitations imposed on console owners by their machines?

Certainly those who can afford it should certainly consider a Megadrive *as well* as their computer, but I'd be willing to bet that after the flashy customised graphics and multi-channel sound of the 'new toy' had worn off, it will be the computer, not the console that will continue to demand the most time. Where else but on 16-bit computers can you continue to tax the brain with strategy games like Midwinter and Ultima VI, and fulfill your dreams of flight with sim's such as Interceptor.

A glance at the current batch of console titles should confirm the limitations of these machines - games like Flying Shark, Thunderforce III and Ghostbusters on the Megadrive, and Ghosts 'n' Goblins on the nintendo are like junk-food for themind. Plenty of arcade action but little to hold the prolonged interest of the brain. I would suggest that such machines are only suitable for children, after which (hopefully) they graduate to slightly more advanced forms of computer entertainment.

Additionally, the enthusiasm which ACE and other mags have for the new beasts would seem to be premature - of the nine consoles featured in 'Hotboxes', four are not yet available in the U.K and Eire, three are very dated and definitely a step down from the likes of the one meg Amiga and many PC's. And that leaves? The Neo-Geo, truly an advanced machine but one which, (as ACE rightly pointed out) is beyond the reach of the everyday user (at £400 anyway). I also have my doubts about software support for many of these machines - EA seemed enthusiastic but I wonder if their style of advanced simulation is really suited to consoles.

Don't be swayed to easily by new technology *just* because it's new. In my view, the new way forward is with the likes of already established machines like the Amiga, ST and Mac - who would have dreamt ten years ago that the likes of Cosmic Osmo would be stretching the latter to such limits.

E. Daly, Co. Dublin

Why is everyone fuming these days? The arguments currently being put forward hail back to those put forward by ST and Amiga owners, and Spectrum and C64 owners before that. The 'my machine is better than yours' debate is all rather petty when you consider that anyone not wanting to involve themselves with a certain format may excercise their right of consumption and simply not 'consume'!

To say that consoles are very limited as regards game styles shows a cynicism and lack of understanding. To begin with, Populous has already been converted to the Megadrive as have golfing titles, and the Nintendo (the World's most successful system to date) sports a range of Ultima products. For the future, plans to convert titles such as F29 Retaliator to console format further demonstrate the capabilities of dedicated machines - how's that for versatility? Certainly there are numerous straight conversions available for consoles which may require little thought to play, but that is so for all machines.

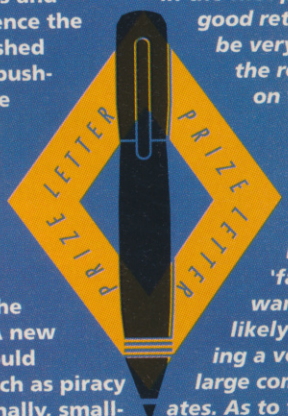
Next, the machines mentioned in 'Hotboxes' are all planned for release in the UK with exception of the NEC Handheld – and are all available through specialist dealers even if not yet officially launched. If you can buy it, we're going to cover it.

Yes, the Neo Geo is expensive, but you can rent it and in any event we always let our readers draw their own conclusions about price. We give you the facts – you decide whether you should splash out on it or not.

STOCKS AND SHAREWARE

'Inspired' by the withdrawal of the U.K arm of Activision, I'm writing you what could be a remedy for both software houses and games-players. Why don't software houses convert at least part of their capital into shares to be offered on the stockmarket? In this way, games-players could support their favourite software houses and (more importantly) influence the kind and quality of published software - perhaps even pushing prices down. Software houses needn't worry so much about piracy and big losses because shareholders would see the whole situation from a company viewpoint, so buying more games (especially from the 'houses they invest in). A new kind of responsibility would develop and activities such as piracy would decrease. Additionally, smaller software houses would gain more strength and be able to compete in the market better.

In short, the two sides of the market would come closer together, resulting in better relationships and conditions for both. I'm no Economics specialist, but I think this would be very possible, couldn't it?
Anne Maczweski, Germany



Although a nice ideal, the answer to your final question is no - it wouldn't work.

For a start, in all probability, only the larger software houses would have the resources to float shares. Any smaller house wishing to do so, would have to guarantee a good return on shares to attract investors in the first place, and to ensure a good return, they would have to be very sure of sales to create the revenue needed to invest on further product (Whew!)

In addition, consumers would inevitably invest in those houses which they considered to be worth the most, rather than a 'favourite'. Smaller software houses would be more likely to be swamped, creating a very limited market of large companies or conglomerates. As to the concepts of less piracy and more spending, both would be unlikely to occur as firstly, there are always people who will prefer 'free' software and secondly, consumer's investing would have less, rather than more disposable income, thus buying less software!

A nice idea, but sadly unlikely – although flotation is more frequent in the larger American market.

WHY NO BINDERS?

I now have a year's supply of ACE but still no binder to put them in. When, oh WHEN are we going to get the binders you've been promising for so long?
A. Baker, Liverpool

We do apologise about the long delay on binders. However, readers will be relieved to hear that a deal has been struck with a supplier and they should be available by mid November at the latest.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP™ SOCCER

SEGA™

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elite

RAINBIRD

BETRAYAL

A WEB OF INTRICATE POSSIBILITIES - BUT FAIR PLAY ISN'T ONE OF THEM

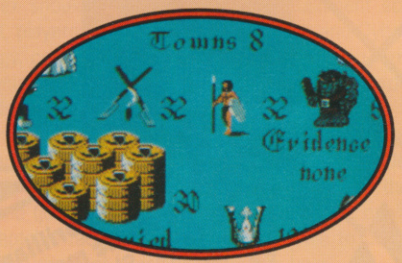
MASTERS OF STRATEGY

A WEB OF INTRICATE POSSIBILITIES - BUT FAIR PLAY ISN'T ONE OF THEM

BETRAYAL

The West Marches is a corrupt land ruled by immoral leaders. You are one of four Knights with a lust for power. And in the pursuit of power, the end justifies the means.

The bloodiest battles yield the greatest spoils. Strategically extend your domain, reduce your rivals' resources, and tighten your stranglehold on the peasants of the land.



The towns provide your power base. Manage them successfully, and harvest the wealth needed to buy, bribe and fight for ultimate power.

Betrayal involves a long, hard, ruthless struggle, starting with the economic management of your towns and cultivation of your lands, culminating in the honing of your military strategy and execution of political subterfuge.

Develop a mastery of political subterfuge, gaining places for your Courtiers at the palaces of the King and Bishop, ready for the coup which will make you the master of Betrayal.

BETRAYAL
A HELL OF A GOD GAME

A new barrel of fine Welsh ale had just been broached. The royal palace's smoky dining hall resounded to cheery voices. To one side of the top table a harpist and a minstrel were struggling to be heard above the commotion caused by two dogs snarling over a bone in a corner.

Eating slowly, I leant forward to catch the breathless whisper of a rival knight.

"They came in at a run, baying like wolves. Four wild-eyed barbarians ready to cut, gouge, pulverise and kill anything that moved."

That news was indeed music to my ears. My forces' attack on his wealthiest town had met with success. Financially weakened, militarily broken, and politically bankrupt, he could no longer hold influence at Court.

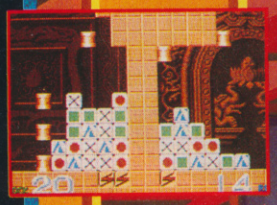
So long as no evidence of my wrong doing remained. So long as the Gods blessed the crops of my harvest. So long as the rumours of the capture of my brother were true. The throne was mine.

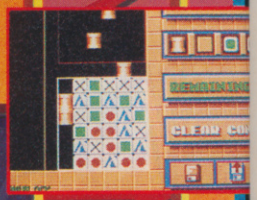
I've cheated, lied, spied and slaughtered. The fruits of Betrayal are mine.

RAINBIRD

PLOT YOUR OPPONENTS DOWNFALL AND...STRIKE

PLOTTING





"...plays brilliantly. An absolute must for puzzle fans" Sinclair User

"...it's simple, but it's dead hard... more exciting than many other puzzle games - tricky, but also very addictive." Crash

"...fun to play and will keep you addicted for hours on end. A good game that is sure to please." Amiga Action

ADDICTION!

Addiction!...that's the name of the game. The concept is simple ...destroying blocks! But once you've got control of those bricks will you ever let go?

TAITO

It all seems so easy, but can you beat the micro or your partner, at this hideously mind boggling game.

Special blocks will give you extra lives... GREAT!... but believe me, you'll need to take every advantage of this software's hardware! You'll need the skill of a Rubi-Cube master and the reflexes of a pigeon at a skeet shoot! Plot your move, take aim and block 'em out!... It's that simple... as simple as grilling ice cubes!

CBM AMIGA - ATARI ST

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Welcome to...

The year is 1999. The location is Southern England. The venue is Gamesworld, an entertainment complex that may seem out of this world, but in reality uses readily available technology. In fact, it could just as easily have been built back in 1990, but no-one had the idea. A pity, because it's proved to be one of the most successful entertainment innovations since the Bingo Hall.

Construction of Gamesworld began in 1997, financed by a rights issue taken out by Maelstrom Gigagames Euro Inc. The original concept was developed by the ACE Think Tank (Tokyo branch) and the project took eighteen months to complete at a cost of ECU420M. The site covers four acres of prime land in downtown Welwyn Garden, just round the corner from the Tesco Ministry.

DREAMWORLD

Gamesworld was envisaged as a haven for committed gamesters who wanted more than just another round of *Robocop 6*. Right from the start, it was decided that the complex should offer dedicated entertainment scenarios for ALL players – not just for Gamepunks and Cyberwillies. Strategy, combat, simulation, brainpower...even romance – we wanted to ensure that everyone had a gameworld they could feel at home in.

Unfortunately, it was a condition of the finance house that an 'adult entertainment' section be included (the 'Porniverse') but this was against the wishes of the Think Tank and (judging by the demonstrations) the public. This unacceptable face of cybergaming is liable to be the subject of government legislation later this year.

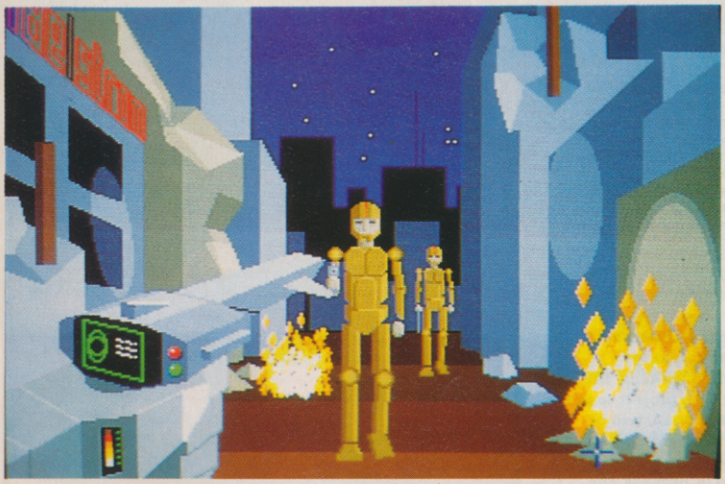
So what has Gamesworld got to offer you? Is it really worth taking a trip on the Turbe and forking out ECU20 an hour for? Judge for yourself...

WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS

Gamesworld consists of eight scenario centres, each dedicated to a particular game discipline (see the various panels in this article), and connected to the Main Lobby. Each centre runs different scenarios each week and comprises a main cockpit area (where the individual players sit and participate), an Actiondome (a scanned area usually used for live encounters), and Robos – robotic figures who commentate or otherwise take part in the scenario.

When you arrive at Gamesworld, you'll need to place a deposit of ECU20 in the IDC machine at the main entrance. This unit will lasergraph your facial appearance and etch it onto your Smart ID, which you take from the slot at the bottom of the machine. If it doesn't appear, try kicking it.

Your Smart ID is a small smart card with transceiver and CPU, originally developed in Japan in 1989 and exhibited at the ACE Living Room of the Future show in 1990. Credit card sized, it holds 250K of memory and can receive/transmit at a range of up to 30 metres. It's used to store your Gamesworld credits (see below) as well as your game status (for all scenarios), personal information, medical details and Community Charge ID (included by law). The lasergraph picture enables us to make a visual identification when necessary – remember, the card is NOT transferable. Your Smart ID card remains the property of Gamesworld and you may surrender it at any time for a 50% refund of your deposit.



This shot is taken from a cyberspace EVA interlude in the Warworld *Eurocraters* scenario (see other screenshot). The player is making his way along Farringdon Road towards the old Guardian offices, now the headquarters of the European Commissariat Propaganda Division.

This feature is based on an article in ACE Issue 150. We have, by special arrangement with our publisher, transmitted it down a temporal fax for your attention. This, people of 1990, is the future of games. And it's not just a dream, as you're about to find out...

You should now enter the Main Lobby. Your card will be scanned automatically on entry and inscribed with the current Gamesworld status and options, preparatory to your joining any of the scenarios.

The Lobby, like the Actiondomes (see caption to main illustration) within each scenario centre, is scanned permanently by a Hyper-IMME system based on the engine developed in 1990 by Subjective Technologies in California (and demonstrated in prototype form at the 1990 CES). Infra red sensors combine with laser tracking devices to monitor your movements throughout the complex, recording any encounters onto your Smart ID.

Eurocraters: **Europe is in the grip of a long and bitter civil war. This screenshot shows a scene from the Battle of London 2040, in which 200 live players and 850 homeplayers participated over a 48 hour period. The player is on a strafing run of Tower Bridge with two Eurocrat Hondas in pursuit**

Cyberwillies come in all shapes, sizes, and sexes. They share one obsession: cyberspace encounters – and not always amorous ones, either

This smoothie from Romanceworld is actually a Gamespunk in disguise (Gamespunks are the Gamesworld equivalent of hackers, buying and selling dodgy Smart IDs)

A regular visitor to the Porniverse. This is the sort of gamester that we can do without, thank you

BUYING TIME

Gamesworld is divided into eight scenario centres. Participation costs ECU20 an hour and is deducted from your Smart ID store as soon as you enter the specific scenario centre.

Credits are purchasable in the Main Lobby 24 hours a day. Ensure therefore that once you're past the Centre Roboguard you get to your assigned cockpit as quickly as possible. All scenarios play 24 hours a day. Please ensure that you leave your cockpit after the session as you would wish to find it. Bedding is not allowed.

Please remember: Gamesworld cannot take responsibility for death or disfigurement unless directly attributable to negligence on the part of its employees. A Medibutton is provided in each cockpit and is tested daily. Use it to summon help if you experience chest pain, breathing difficulty, or acute adrenalin poisoning.

Information about the current scenarios available in each centre is displayed on the Wallmenu at all times, together with booking information that tells you how many spaces are still available for players. Remember that in addition to the cockpit players, there are limited places for home players – see elsewhere in this article. Choose with confidence, enter, and enjoy....

You don't have to attend Gamesworld in person to get involved. Purchase or rent a Gameslink and you can play a part in all the scenarios except Fantasyworld. Home players take different roles in scenarios from live players, often interacting with the players at Gamesworld and even making money out of them.

BEHIND THE SCENES...

Here at Maelstrom head offices, beside the clear, sparkling waters and golden beaches of the Mersey estuary, we evolve the complex scenarios that inject life into the Gamesworlds.

A coordinator heads each development team and allocates tasks for the think-tank, the software workshop, and the art studio. The think-tanks are tailor-made for each project to provide a broad spectrum of ideas – a Warworld think-tank usually includes a historian, two or three novelists, a games designer, a physicist, and one ordinary Gamesworld player, chosen at random. In the software workshop, we use 3D modelling hooked up to 5th generation language program generators to develop the code that runs the game. Our art studio is, perhaps, the strangest. Most of our artists are sculptors and all of them do their work directly in a cyberspace environment. Come into our studios and all you will see is a group of people wearing goggles and waving datagloves about!

NINJAWORLD

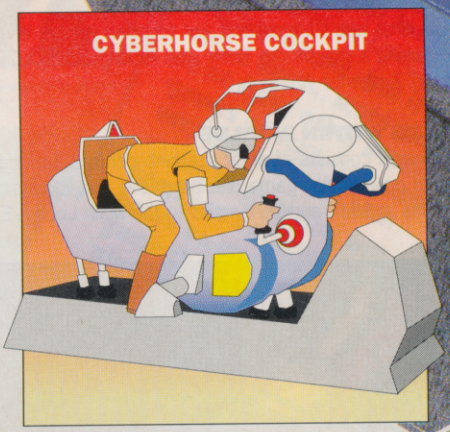
Ninjaworld offers players the opportunity to develop alter egos of awesome power and throw them into combat against other players. The cockpits give full control over giant robotic machines which are configured by the player during practise combat sessions. Details of configurations are, of course, stored on your Smart ID. The Actiondome is fully scanned by a Hyper IMME system and is used by players to develop physical fighting manoeuvres that are then 'learnt' by the players' mechanical counterparts. For example, if you decide that the only way to defeat Mechmacho 4 is by using a particularly vicious throat kick, you can enter the required movements by carrying them out yourself (in slow motion) on the Actiondome floor, then editing the sequence in your cockpit before going into battle.

THE PORNIVERSE

The less said about this the better. It is currently closed due to technical difficulties following the unauthorised activity of a Cyberwillie who gained illicit access to Level 42. Although compelled by our backers to develop this centre, we are undismayed by impending legislation aimed at making this sort of thing illegal.

Robos are located beside the Actiondome in each centre. They are computer controlled figures who fulfil different roles in each scenario. Think of them as a 'chorus' – feeding opinions and information into the action and occasionally even participating in it.

Although of a similar basic design, cockpits can vary hugely in control configuration depending on the centre in which they appear and the scenario currently in progress. This cockpit has been extensively modified for High Moon – the most popular scenario ever to run at Fantasyworld, involving players in a dramatic shoot-out in a ghost town on the dark side of Luna.



FANTASYWORLD

This scenario centre gives you the chance to fulfil your wildest dreams. The cockpits have been especially designed for maximum flexibility and as a result, the mechanical interactivity of the scenarios is somewhat reduced. As compensation, however, Fantasyworld scenarios feature considerable cyberspace interludes and use the Actiondome as a Hyper IMME scanned area to monitor the interactions of numerous live players involved in role-playing encounters. The Robos adopt different identities at various points during the scenarios. Because of the emphasis on human interaction in this world, home players are able to log on as observers only.

Gamesworld is split into eight centres. Each centre can mount different scenarios and has hardware dedicated to different game disciplines.

POWERUP BOOTH

SPORTSWORLD

Sportsworld bears a similar relation to Ninjaworld as Crimeworld does to Strategyworld. The two centres are very similar, but the scenarios are very different. Sportsworld also uses the Actiondome to enable players to perfect actual physical manoeuvres. Scenarios cover all the main sports and some very exotic ones as well. The most popular is *Bloodball* – a totally unsubtle blend of *Kick Off 8* and *Karate Kid 6*.

STRATEGYWORLD

Some of us prefer to develop our offensives over a greater period of time than the hurly-burly of Warworld and Ninjaworld allows. Strategyworld scenarios have highly detailed cockpits with numerous control and monitoring facilities. As in Warworld, the Actiondome serves as a vast display area that alters configuration according to the scenario. Ringside Robos act as commentators and informants, occasionally (very occasionally!) broadcasting news of particular importance. Homeplayers can often play a larger part in Strategyworld scenarios than in any of the others.

The Main Lobby is entirely 'live', scanned continually by a powerful Hyper IMME system. If you're out of credits, you will almost certainly find yourself 'assisted' by a friendly credit sales executive. Gamepunks who are out to fight the system are often apprehended in this area if they are careless in programming their Smart IDs.

ROMANCEWORLD

Become a Barbara Cybercartland! Romanceworld cockpits are tastefully decorated in pink and fully equipped with Gossiphones, Image Enhancers, and Charismatrons. Our current scenario, *Royal Wedding*, challenges you to manipulate your social standing amongst your fellow players until you can worm your way into the bedroom of the Silicon Princess Mara (or, for female players, the Silicon Prince Marky). The Actiondome serves as a 'live encounter' location for hot blooded Romeos and Juliets! Scenario turns last five hours – listen to the wedding bells at the end of each cycle!

Note: to comply with Tesco Ministry legislation, certain sequences in Romanceworld may not be available to younger players. Latex bodysuits are mandatory for players wishing to play at Level 10.

Cockpits (see other illustrations) are in essence the same in each centre, but are designed to be configurable for different scenarios.

The Main Lobby also features the Comms Booth. This booth sells Gameslinks (see illustration) to home players. It also enables players to leave messages for each other and to communicate via satellite with other Gamesworld complexes throughout the world.

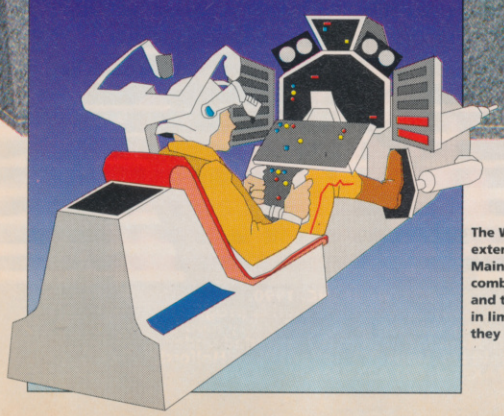
Each centre has an 'Actiondome' – an area set aside for physical interaction. The Actiondome in Warworld is smaller than the others as it serves only as a display device. In Crimeworld, Fantasyworld, and Romanceworld, however, it occupies half the centre and is used for live interaction. Interactive Actiondomes are scanned by Hyper IMME systems (see main text).

WARWORLD

Confront your fellow players in a fight to the finish. Warworld cockpits give you complete control of the fighting machines involved in the current scenario. The Actiondome in Warworld is given over to a large constantly updated battlemap, and the Robos act as news casters. Homeplayers may participate as 'spies', hacking into player's cockpit strategy systems and selling information to other players for game credits which may be used for live participation at Gamesworld.

The Main Entrance to Gamesworld leads the punter by a Smart ID issue device. No-one get in without a card.

WARWORLD COCKPIT



The Warworld cockpit is unusual in that it can be modified to some extent by the user himself. Players can purchase power-ups in the Main Lobby which literally plug into the fascia, giving additional combat potential. Cockpit hardware design was done by Neo-Konix and the control circuitry is by Flare International. Players participate in limited cyberspace sequences at various parts of the game, or when they want to indulge in EVA (extra vehicular activity).

CRIMEWORLD

Similar to Strategyworld, but the game turns are much shorter, usually lasting no more than a week (for international terrorist/fugitive scenarios) and often as little as six hours in more conventional, but more intense murder investigations. The scenarios here are always crime mysteries and pit the players against complex simulations of criminal and terrorist activity.

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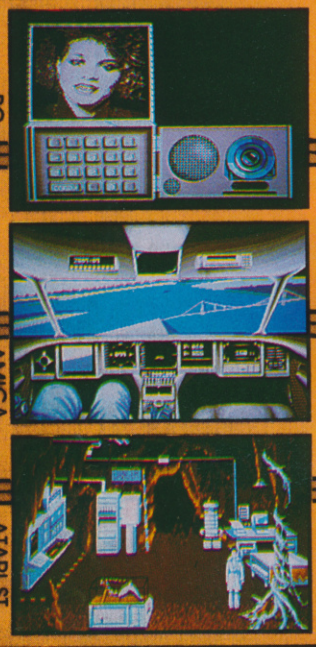

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Detective Story

Features:

- Interact with more than 27 digitised characters and respond to questions, bribes and threats.
- Use the innovative 'point 'n' click' system which enables you to search without typing.
- Fly your 'Lotus speeder' to locations all along the West Coast.
- Rummage through offices, warehouses and factories looking for clues.

U.S. GOLD®

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Crime Wave™
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Features:

- Incredible digitised "Motion Graphics"™ (featuring real actors and models).
- Real Sound™ digitised sound – no hardware required.
- Unique three dimensional scrolling playing fields.
- Tremendous depth and playability.
- Breathtaking 256 colour VGA/MCGA graphics.

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computer's specifications.

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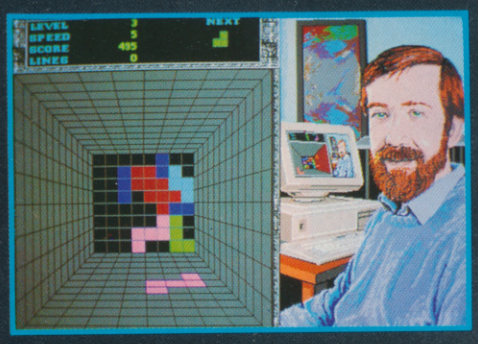
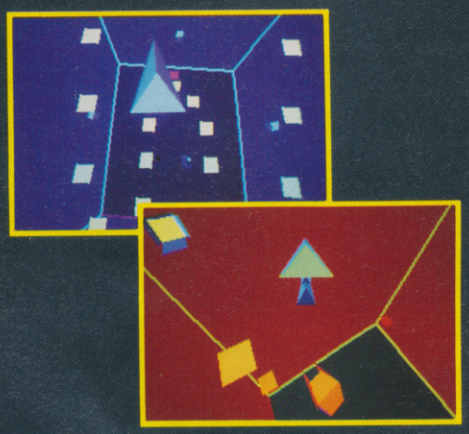


« Master the colours, rule space... »

ATARI ST-STE, AMIGA, PC & compatibles, Spectrum, C64, Macintosh

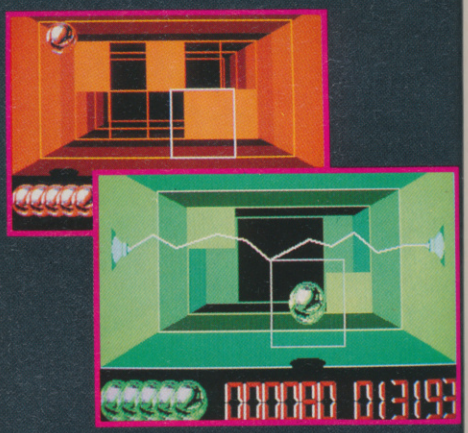
Alpha Waves



« They created the dream machine... »

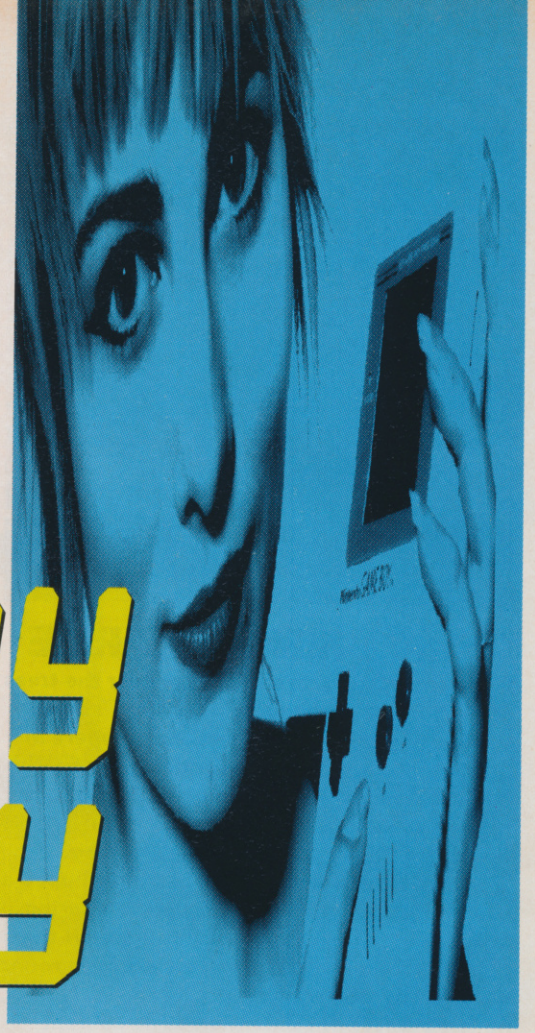
ATARI ST-STE, AMIGA, PC & compatibles

The light corridor



« The echo of lights on the walls of silence... »

ATARI ST-STE, AMIGA, PC & compatibles



GAME BOY GIVEAWAY

Yay! Not just one, not just two, not just twenty...FIFTY Game Boys are up for grabs as ACE and Nintendo celebrate the console's UK launch

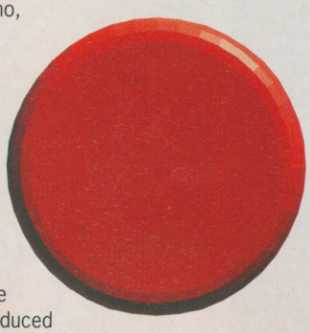
Picture the scene. It's Christmas Eve, and down the corridor your kid brother is waiting eagerly for the clippety-clop of cloven hooves and heavy breathing down the chimney. Could Santa possibly be bringing him a passport to endless portable gaming pleasure??

Who cares. Because YOU, you lucky dog, have already got your mitts on your very own Game Boy, thanks to that superlative ACE/Nintendo competition in issue 39. When howls of disappointment echo down the corridor (as Kiddo unwraps his pair of fluorescent nylon socks), the only sound that will come from your room is that of dancing Russians celebrating Level 9, handicap 5, in Gameboy *Tetris*. Ho, ho, ho...

IT COULDN'T BE EASIER

Yup, even sickeningly selfish dreams like that can come true. All you have to do to get into the running for one of these superlative little hot-boxes is follow the instructions below. Nintendo are very generously giving away 50 Game Boys and to celebrate we've produced our own Game Boy Companion (mounted on the cover of this issue). Read it carefully: if your smart, it could unlock the secrets of the competition!

Right. Here's the nitty gritty. On these two pages you will find a short narrative report concerning one of the country's most influential personages. You will note that five words have been missed out. All you have to do is jot down each missing word on a postcard as instructed in the HOW TO ENTER BOX. It's as simple as that! So get to it, and you too could be going ping-ping-whizz instead of plink-plink-fizz in the New Year.



HOW TO ENTER

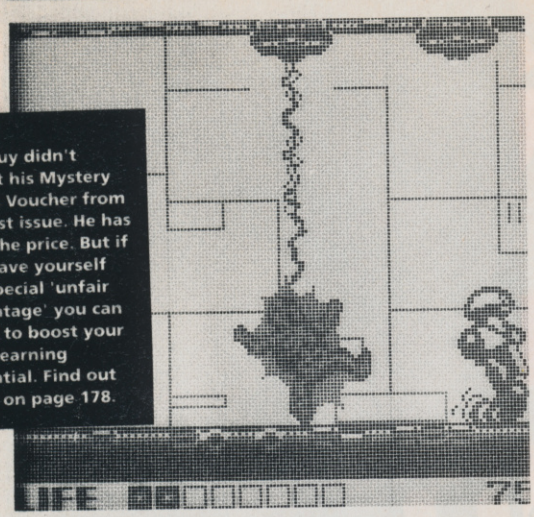
Here's how to enter the competition. It couldn't be easier....

1. Get yourself a blank postcard.
2. Read our very silly story, Game Prince Charlie. There are five words missing. Each missing word is numbered in the text.
3. Use your immense skill and awesome judgement to determine what the missing words are. Your cover booklet The Gameboy Companion will help with some of the answers. The booklet is free with this issue – if it was missing when you bought it, check with your newsagent.
4. Write down the five missing words, together with their numbers, on the postcard. EG 'Word Number 1 is Philip' and so on.
6. Write down your name, address, and (if possible) a daytime telephone number.
7. For our information (this is not part of the competition and is optional) tell us (a) which bit of this issue you liked best and (b) which bit you liked least.
8. Check the entry rules below, then post the card to:

ACE Gameboy Competition
Box 1
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU

RULES

a) Employees of EMAP Images, Nintendo, and anyone involved in the manufacture, sale, or distribution of their products are not eligible for entry.
b) Closing date for entries is 7th December 1990
c) The winners of the 50 free Game Boys will be the first 50 correct qualifying entries drawn at random
d) Entries MUST be addressed as shown above. Incorrectly addressed entries will not be entered into the competition.
e) Only one entry per household.



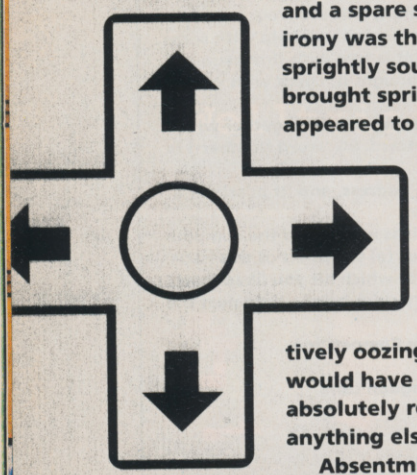
ZAP!
This guy didn't collect his Mystery Bonus Voucher from the last issue. He has paid the price. But if you gave yourself our special 'unfair advantage' you can use it to boost your prize earning potential. Find out more on page 178.

GAME PRINCE CHARLIE

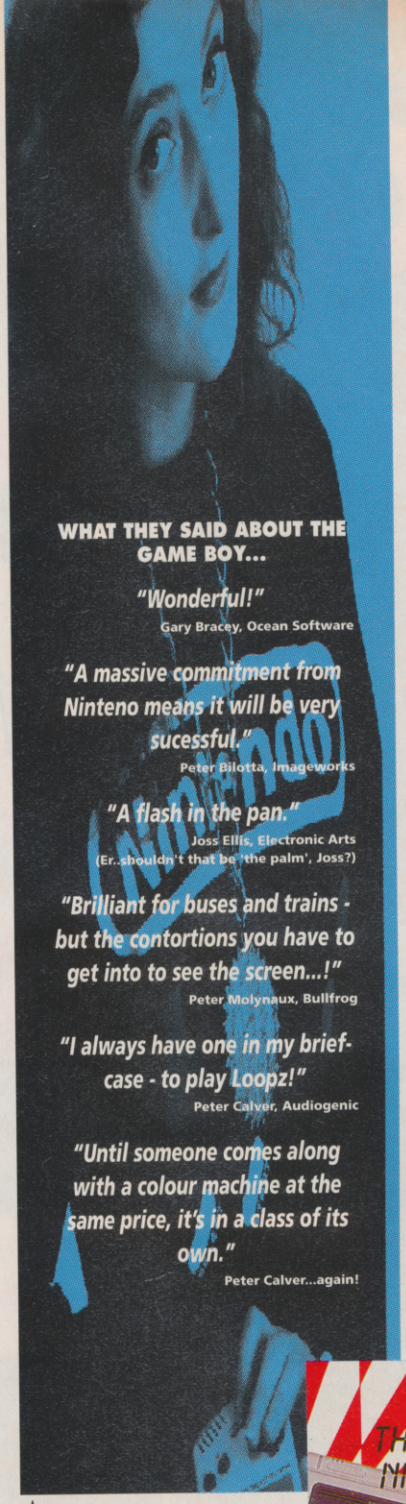
Dawn was poking its cheery face over the trees at the bottom of the garden as (1) stirred sleepily in his four poster bed. Somewhere in the distance came the disgruntled yap of a Corgi, followed by a yelp of pain. Old Cobbett was up to his tricks with the dogs again, shattering the fragile peace of early morning.

Charles turned over in his bed and slipped a hand under the pillow, feeling the reassuring bulk of his (2) where he had slipped it the night before, exhausted, after a vigorous round of *Paperboy*. Such larks! Despite the early hour, he felt a shiver of excitement as he contemplated the day ahead. Breakfast with Diana, followed by a few quick rounds of that Russian thingie, (3) , which should put him in a good position when he met that Gorby fellow for lunch.

If only Diana could share his new found enthusiasm for advanced computer entertainment, mused Charles, as the butler entered with a cup of tea, a charcoal bickie, and a spare set of batteries. The irony was that whereas the sprightly sound of dancing sprites brought spring to his heart, it appeared to send Diana screaming out of the room. Surely some of the games should take her fancy? What about (4) , where you had to collect the diamonds – positively oozing Princess appeal, one would have thought. But no, she absolutely refused to play ball, or anything else, for that matter.



Absentmindedly, he slipped the Game Boy out from under his (5) and fingered the switch, his restless soul eased by the innocent 'ping' as the machine booted up. How clever he'd been to persuade that Nintendo chappie to let him have one of his very own! And what a pity that the fellow hadn't had a spare to give to Diana! And how absolutely spiffing it was to be able to show her how jolly *good* he was getting at all those games! Strange, though, how offish she'd been recently...



Suzi Q of pop duo ST Melody. Their hit number is entitled *Mario In Wonderland*

Flummoxed by some of those missing words? Perhaps you should have taken a closer look at our Game Boy companion, free on this month's cover

NINTENDO HOTLINE

If you;ve got a Game Boy, you'll be pleased to hear that Nintendo have launched a UK Helpline. There are two numbers you could call. The first is 0626 65500 and has three operators to handle general enquiries. Then, from January 1st 1991, 0329 822662 will be open for club queries, new release information, and playing tips. Nintendo hope to build up the second number with as many as 20 operators by the end of 1991.

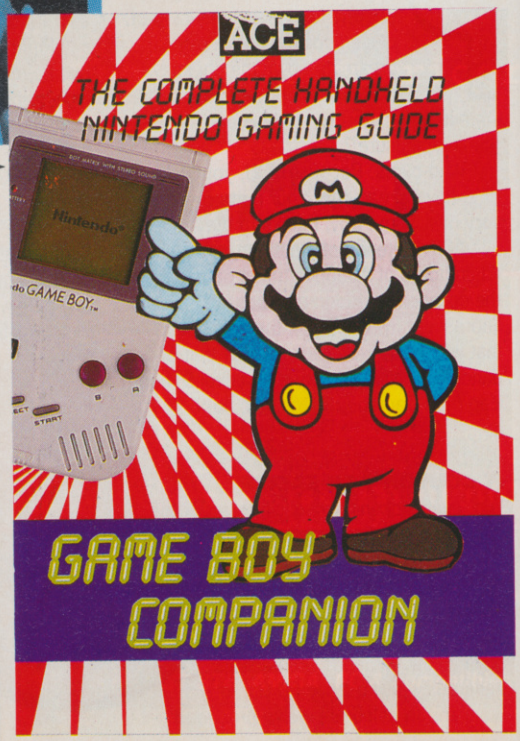
£1000 OF SOFTWARE STILL TO BE WON!

Last month's scratch card competition was one of the most popular we've ever run. And there are still some prizes to be claimed: including the £5000 first prize. That means that SOMEWHERE there's a card lying about that could revolutionise your gaming career! And there are still many free games left to be claimed. *

Meanwhile, here – as promised – are the contents of the 0898 numbers. There's still lots of time to get your claims in: the deadline is November 30th (1990, of course). Overseas readers (who may be unable to connect with the 0898 service) should check the number on their card with the list below.

- If your card bears the message WINNER 0898 334 301, you've won a discount off a game from the OCEAN list printed in the last issue.
- If your card bears the message WINNER 0898 334 302, you've won a discount off a game from the US GOLD list printed in the last issue.
- If your card bears the message WINNER 0898 334 303, you've won a discount off a game from the MIRRORSOFT list printed in the last issue.
- If your card bears the message WINNER 0898 334 304, you've won a discount off a game from the MICROPROSE list printed in the last issue.
- If you get the number 0898 334 305, you've won either a free game or – yay! – £5000 worth of software.

Follow the instructions given on pp46/47 of the last issue to claim your discount or prize.

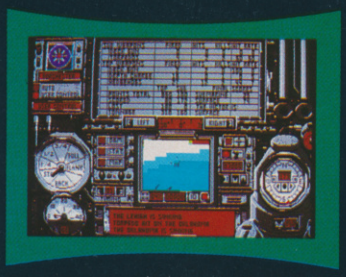


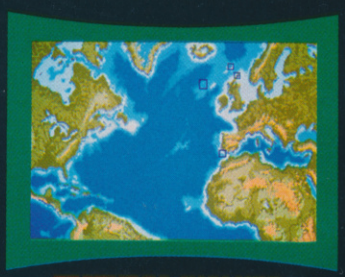
WOLF PACK

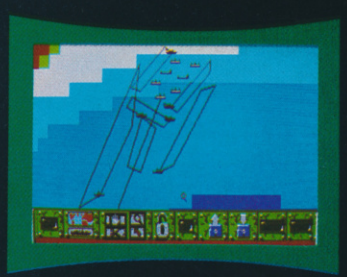
THE ODDS ARE EVEN . . . WILL YOU ENJOY A HERO'S WELCOME OR REST FOREVER IN AN ICY GRAVE?

WOLFPACK IS A PRECISE SIMULATION OF A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN A GERMAN SUBMARINE WOLFPACK AND AN ALLIED SHIPPING CONVOY. PLAY THE PART OF A WOLFPACK COMMANDER OR A CONVOY ESCORT COMMANDER TO EXPERIENCE THE REALISM OF A FULL SCALE, REAL TIME, STRATEGIC ENCOUNTER.

SCREEN SHOTS: PC VERSION







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list this Christmas!

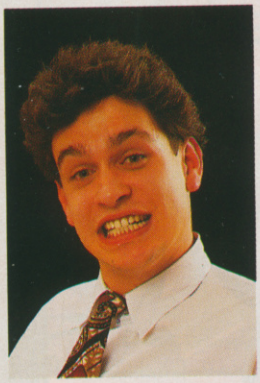
Golden

Sega's hack'n'slash coin-op, *Golden Axe*, is a very popular coin-op thanks to its simple gameplay and gorgeous graphics. And any arcade success must be converted. First came the critically acclaimed Megadrive conversion, now Virgin has turned *Golden Axe* into micro-code on the Spectrum, C64, Amiga, ST and CPC. So are you ready to slash some sprites and hack without hesitation?

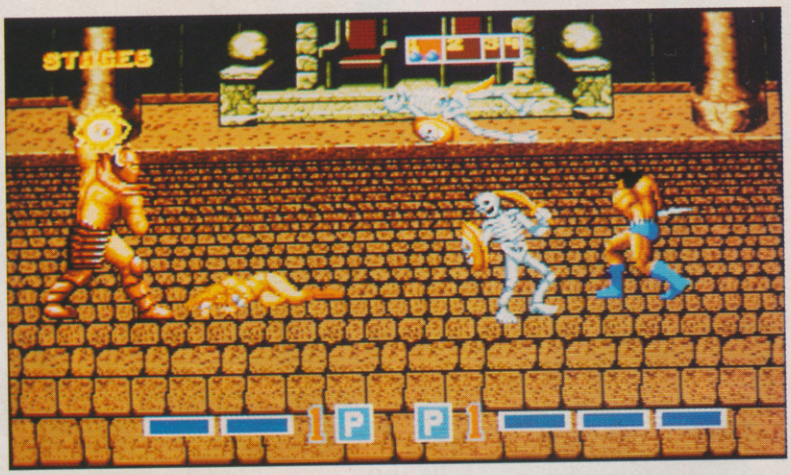
Once upon a time in a strange kingdom filled with fire-breathing tax-collectors, an alliance of three brave warriors began a deadly quest for the Golden Axe. This is their story. The fair land of Yuria has been thrown into a state of chaos by Death Adder and his army of monster thugs. After savaging defenceless villages, this evil reptile has kidnapped the King and beautiful princess. Only one thing stands between Adder domination and lasting peace – and that's you.

Golden Axe is a six-stage horizontally-scrolling hack-everything-to-death beat'em-up. You (and a friend if you opt for the simultaneous two-player option) start the game by choosing to be one of the aforementioned warriors: Ax-Battler, Gilius-Thunderhead or Tyris-Flare. Armed with a sword or axe, your warrior has a full complement of combat manoeuvres such as punch, stab, slice, body twirl, body slam, kick and head-butt. Your Hit Meter shows how many hits you can take until you lose a life.

In addition, each warrior has an individual magic spell which you use as a 'smart bomb' to destroy all your enemies currently on-screen – though some may survive the devastation. The power of the spell depends on the amount of magic pots you're carrying (shown at the top of the screen). You collect magic pots – and bars for extra strength – by 'mugging' little Elves who appear throughout the game.



Warriors of the wastelands. These are the guys you can control: Ax-Battler the Barbarian heard his mother's final screams and she was put to death by Death Adder – now he wants revenge. Ax-Battler



"Golden Axe on the Amiga looks good, plays well and has all the features you need."
Neil Young, Software Producer at Probe

TOTAL DEMENTIA

Dementia was the software development team in charge of the converting Golden Axe onto the Amiga. Richard Costello wrote the code and Kevin Bulmer produced the graphics. Additional graphics were provided by Mark Knowles and Adrian Carless. "Golden Axe on the Amiga is a hybrid of the Megadrive and coin-op versions," says Costello. "Everybody says the Megadrive version is identical to the coin-op, but it isn't. The Amiga version shares the coin-op's sprite designs but obviously doesn't have as many colours." The Amiga conversion has a two 16-colour palettes for the sprites and backdrops. The blitter and 68000 work overtime to produce a game that runs within a frame – 960 'blits' are performed every 1/50th of a second. "It stretches the boundaries of Amiga games," confidently states Costello. Costello even reflects the sprites in real-time. Golden Axe on the Amiga even includes subtle colour-changing during the six-stages. Some more Amiga Golden Axe tech-specs: over 600 sprite animations, max. sprite size of 64x96 pixels, 18 sound FX (including uppercut hit, pummel, hitting the ground and female/male scream) and 6 soundtracks (incorporating such classic tracks as 'Wilderness' and 'Pass of the Fiend'). Surprisingly Costello thinks Golden Axe has a lot more depth than the normal fighting game. He previously worked on Mask and Ramrod for Gremlin, Hot Rod for Activision and the C16 version of Way of the Exploding Fist for Me!bourne House.

Axe

As VIRGIN goes on a coin-op hack attack, Rik Haynes is there to pick up the pieces

ACE PREPLAY

Amiga Golden Axe FOR:
- Very close to the coin-op and Sega Megadrive versions.
- Bright colourful sprites.
- Has a neat 'arcade' feel.

Amiga Golden Axe AGAINST:
- Gameplay lacks variety and quickily becomes repetitive.
- Like the original coin-op, the game does not possess any depth.

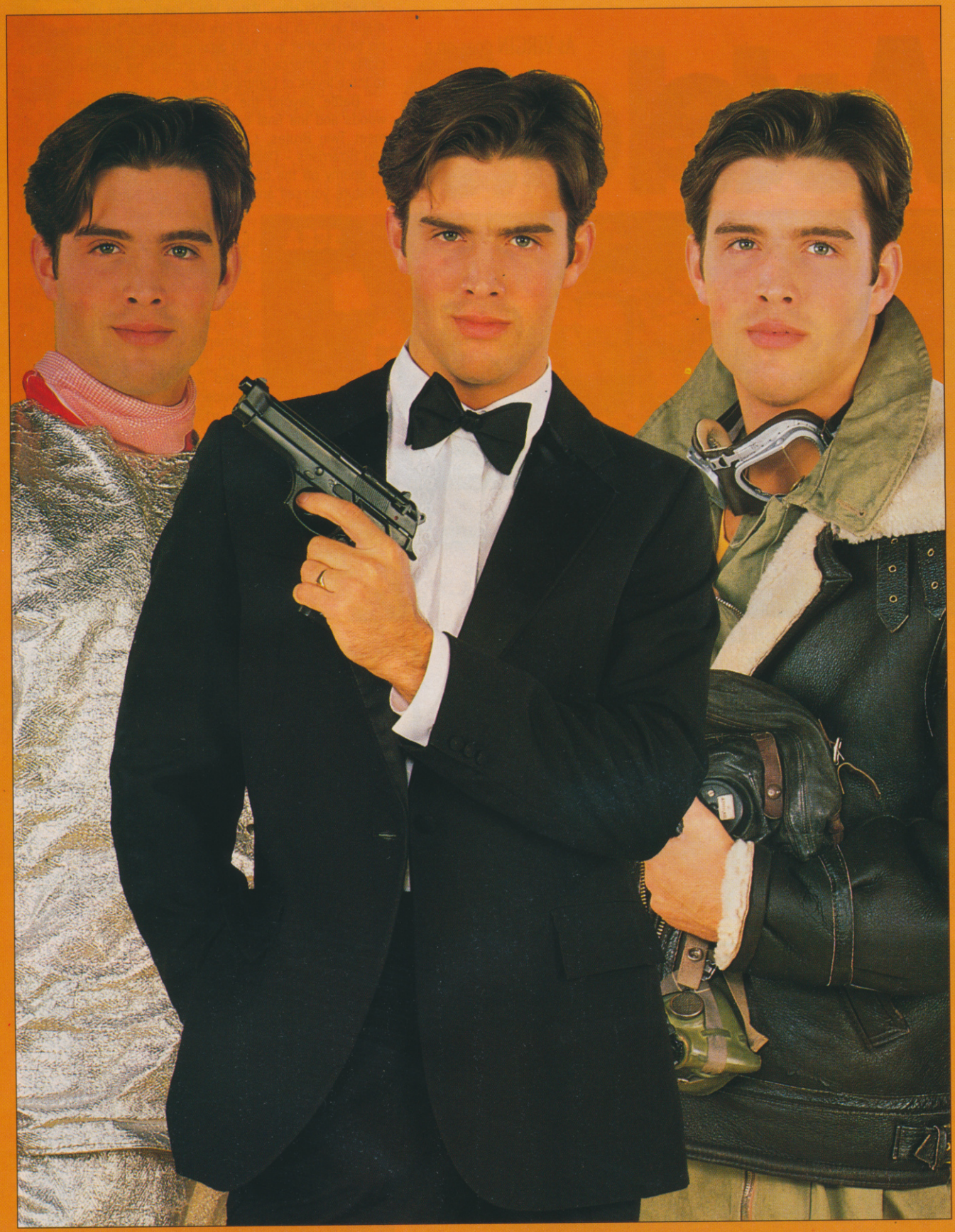
can command up to four levels of Volcano Magic. Tyris-Flare is a tough Amazon warrior, the last surviving member of her jungle tribe. When she's really angry she can command up to six levels of Fire Magic. Gilius-Thunderhead lost his twin-brother in a fight against Adder's soldiers. His speciality is somersauting and scorching his enemies with up to three levels of Lightning Magic.

Battle beyond the sprites. Between a walk in the woods and the final confrontation with Death Adder, you meet Twin Brutes, Lizard Women, Skeleton Swordsmen and Bizarrians – Death Adder's riding-beasts. If you knock an enemy off the back of a Bizarrian, you can mount the creature yourself and spit flames and twirling fireballs, or wallop people with its tail. Golden Axe even includes a Turtle Village, though fortunately there's no sign of any teenage mutant ninjas.

Probe handled the micro-conversions of *Golden Axe*. The Amiga version of *Golden Axe* was written by Dementia (the software development team responsible for Core's ACE-Rated *Corporation*). David Whitaker provided the music, and three graphics artists worked on the game. David Shea programmed the Spectrum and CPC conversions, with graphics by Jason Green and music by Sound Images. The Design Team (the same guys who produced the C64 version of *Turbo Outrun* last year) wrote *Golden Axe* on the C64 – Mark Kelly programmed, Steve Crow designed the graphics. Golden Axe's manual was even written by ex-ACE editor Graeme Kidd.

ACE played the near-completed versions of the game on Amiga (see the Pre-Play panel further details) and CPC. *Golden Axe* on the Amiga is very close to the original coin-op. All the important features have been included and the graphics and sound bear a close resemblance to the technically-superior arcade machine. The CPC version suffers a little in the scrolling department (it's a bit jerky) but has colourful, detailed sprites and backdrops. ACE's only worry about converting *Golden Axe* onto micros is the original's lack of gameplay variety and depth. But as Neil Young (Software Producer at Probe) points out, "Our brief was not to enhance or modify *Golden Axe*, but stay within the limits of the target machine". *Golden Axe* may only keep you hooked for hours instead of days or weeks. Still, you'll have immense fun slashing and bashing creatures from a fantasy world, especially during the simultaneous two-player option – you can even hack each-other to bits!

The problem with life is



that you only live it once.

One lifetime of experiences, one lifetime of fun.

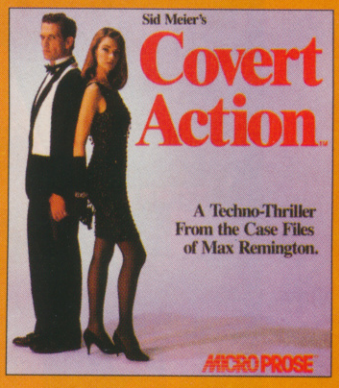
And that seems a little harsh.

As the leading force in simulation software, we try to expand horizons at MicroProse. So, this Christmas, we're giving you three different lives to live. Three stunning experiences. Three lots of fun.

THE PAST

The date is 1914, and you are a British, American or French flying ace of World War I, attempting to take out Axis pilots in hair-raising dogfights and shoot down Zeppelins before they can cross the channel. "Knights of the Sky" is historically accurate, allowing you to use more sophisticated and powerful aircraft as you move towards 1918, navigating by map and compass, just like the real aerial combat pioneers of seventy five years ago. You can even end up challenging the the best hot-shot pilots that Germany could put into the air, such as Oswald Boelcke, Max Immelman, or even the great Baron von Richtofen, the Red Baron himself. "Knights of the Sky" features MicroProse's acclaimed 3D graphics system, further enhanced and improved, taking the flight sim genre into a whole new era. Available initially on IBM PC compatible machines, Atari ST and Commodore Amiga versions will follow shortly.

THE PRESENT



The 1990's are the age of international crime, terrorism and espionage - and you are the clandestine superspy charged with travelling the globe to combat these forces in MicroProse's new techno-thriller, "Covert Action". Using the latest electronic bugging techniques, high tech intelligence sources and good old fashioned clue hunting, its up to you to identify the ringleaders and bring them to justice. Become expert in wiretapping, decipher acquired information with the aid of sophisticated code-breaking programs, and use surveillance to complete the picture. And if your technological know-how, cunning and luck ever let you down, you've always got the latest combat weapons such as CS gas, stun grenades and compact sub-machine guns to help you out. Across Europe, the Middle East and Central America, with 16 cities to cover in each area, you'll have your work cut out to make sense of the allegiances between numerous terrorist groups, known political activists and foreign spies, all undertaking "Covert Action". Available for IBM PC compatible computers.

THE FUTURE

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" I haven't seen a decent shoot-em-up for ages (in fact Silkworm was probably the last). Now this looks set to end with a product from the very same Silkworm programmers that could challenge the mighty R-Type itself!"
(Zero Sep. 1990)
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Kick Off 2: looking good on a state-of-the-art Philips monitor

Light Fantastic

The company that's bringing you CD-I has got three superb colour monitors for lucky ACE readers.

Dutch giants Philips have produced just about every conceivable electrical device for the home, many of which have been innovative and influential.

Having made its presence felt in the computer market in previous years, (an early eighties console, PC compatibles and the like) Philips return with a successor to their immensely successful 14 inch colour monitor (the CM8833), with the MkII version. The original CM8833 has notched up over 2 million sales worldwide (four of them are in the ACE office) since its launch four years ago, enjoying success as a multi-functional monitor for both games and business-applications.

The latest model has been redesigned and upgraded with 1992's single European Market and compatibility firmly in mind. Fortunately for you, 1992 will come sooner than you think, because not only do the Dutch give us diamonds, cheese and tulips, but they give us monitors as well - 3 to be precise. All you have to do to win one of these sleek new screens, is discover all 12 words hidden deviously within the grid. Each is associated with the new CM8833/MkII and our thanks go to Philips and Mathieu Thomas (PR) for the prizes.

TECH-SPECS

The CM8833/MkII is compatible with a wide range of computers including the Amiga, Atari, IBM PC and laptop computers, and incorporates TTL digital, RGB analog and CVBS input signals (the first two for computer and the latter for video). Sound output is delivered in stereo and may be run through an in-built headphone socket. The 14-inch slotted anti-glare screen sports a CRT pitch of 0.42mm, a resolution of 600x285, line frequency of 15.6 kHz and 2000 characters per screen.. The monitor can also receive TV pictures with an optional tuner, while a fast blanking feature allows superimposition of computer graphics over video images.

If all of the above means as much to you as a Bessel Function (?), what it all boils down to is a rather sexy monitor that gives you a clear, crisp picture and real stereo delivery.

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B	L	D	C	X	D	M	R	L
I	A	I	I	Y	A	O	A	U
T	N	S	C	G	A	N	L	T
A	A	P	E	K	I	I	C	I
P	H	L	K	L	V	T	B	O
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PHILIPS COMPO: HOW TO ENTER

Locate the twelve words on the grid. Words can go up or down, forwards or backwards, and on diagonals. Then simply jot them down (on a postcard only, please) together with your name, address, and daytime phone number (if possible). Post to: ACE PHILIPS COMP, Box 3, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Make sure you read the rules below before sending in your entry.

1. Deadline for entries is Thursday 6th December.
2. The winners will be the first three correct entries drawn at random from the qualifying entries.
3. Unstamped or incorrectly addressed entries will not be eligible for entry.
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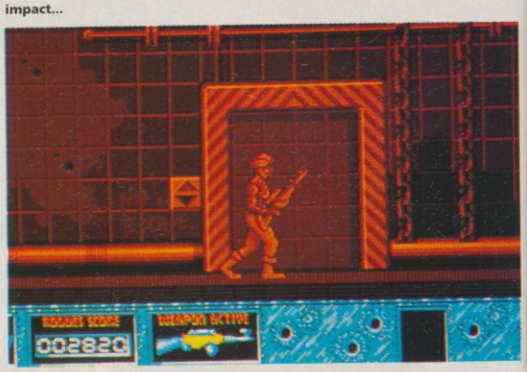
SILICON STRIPS

...or silicon strip offs?

ACE investigates the latest batch of comic-inspired releases

Judge Dredd makes a definite effort to mimic the original's graphic humour. That Fattie there is going to cause our hero serious damage on impact...



Spiderman's scenario is disturbingly similar to Jet Set Willy – but Spidey does get up to some impressive acrobatics.

Why can't a game be like a comic? Or, for that matter, why can't a comic be like a game? There have to be some pretty obvious answers to these questions but, notwithstanding the obvious differences between games and comics, softcos persist in trying to borrow the glamour of the world's more successful strips and varnishing their products with it. Cinema, with its big budgets and star promotions, means that practically every software company under the sun has tried the 'interactive movie' marketing slant; comics, with their high graphic content, cult status, and cheap mass distribution, have a similar effect. So called 'interactive comics' go back a long way and, judging by the current batch of releases, have still got a long way to go.

But you've got to hand it to the softcos. They keep on trying. When you've paid heavy pennies for that comic license, you've got to make at least some effort to ensure that your program reflects the atmosphere of the great original.

Game designers and programmers have taken different approaches to this thorny problem, ranging from the bizarre to the ingenious. Remember Slaine, where the central figure had continual 'thoughts' scrolling above his head – you had to grab them as they floated past to get him to do anything. Weird, huh? Other approaches were more mind-numbingly literal: Melbourne House's Redhawk and Kwah! configured the screen as a comic strip in glorious monochrome. Frames scrolled past horizontally (and slowly) as Redhawk acted according to your commands. Yes, it did look terrible.

Other softcos took a more relaxed approach. Take the hero, shove him in a scenario that somehow reflects his qualities or character, and damn the rest. Perhaps it's not surprising that this approach has resulted in the best games: the original Dan Dare from Virgin, to take one example – or Batman from Ocean. Very sensibly, neither of these games made any attempt to LOOK like a comic, and as a result they didn't play like one either. Just as well.

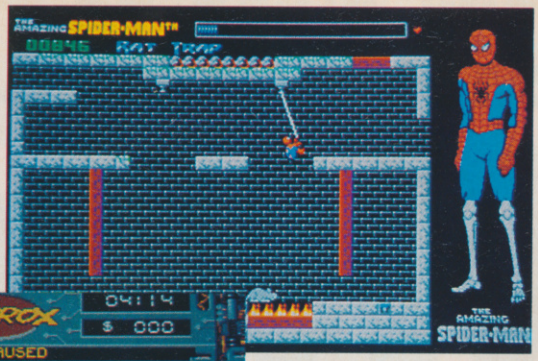
However, just because games like those weren't bad because they put gaming first and comic presentation second doesn't explain why they were any good. With that question in mind, we've checked out the current comic releases and tried to determine what makes a good comic license....if there be such a thing...

ATMOSPHERE

First, comics succeed when they generate atmosphere. 2000AD (one of the most prolific licensors into software formats) once ran a strip (not one of its most successful) called Metalzoic – a tremendous epic of a time when the world was dominated by a robotic ecology and distinguished by almost no speech at all. Much of the strip was concerned with textless sequences of tumultuous action, generating bags of atmosphere but perhaps a little obscure for the little ones. However, that same atmosphere underpins the success of Judge Dredd

BECOME A COMIC STAR!

We've got a great competition next month to celebrate our review of Rogue Trooper. Rogue Trooper artist Dave Gibbons will be conspiring with Krisalis to give you an opportunity not only to win some original Rogue artwork but also to star in it yourself! Don't miss it in the next issue of ACE, out Thursday 6th December.



Swinging on the rope with Spiderman...the screens combine puzzle solving with acrobatic timing problems. One sad point – the pace of the game is rather slow. One good point – there are lots of screens.

Ranx sequences often end up with piles of bodies on the floor. Just like the original, but hardly startlingly original stuff in gameplay terms

and Rogue Trooper. Any game wanting to capitalise on that has to have programmers and designers that are fully in tune with the original. Andy Wilson, one of the principal programmers of Dan Dare, was a rabid Dare fan. Coincidence? Surely not.

GRAPHICS

Graphic presentation is obviously a very important part of the comic recipe. Unfortunately it's highly detailed, with wide variations in colour (often monochrome). It's also, of course, static. Comic art styles could, however, be better implemented in screen designs than at present. Of the games under consideration, only Dredd and Spiderman (plus, judging by the demo disk, Hagar) really borrow the graphic style of the originals. A pity.

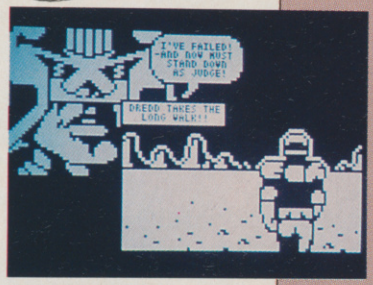
CHARACTER

Most comic strips have one central hero who's personal idiosyncrasies make him both attractive and compelling. Dredd may be the Law, but he also shows occasional self-doubt. Rogue may be half-machine, but he's also half-man, as his fantasies about his lost love frequently reveal. Ranx may be all machine, but his exuberance is all human. Spiderman may be a super-hero but' like Batman, he's also more vulnerable than most of his impervious companions. Any game scenario has to recreate that character as far as is possible in terms of both scenario and game objectives.

NARRATIVE

Apart from the above, the other essence-of-comic is straightforward narrative. A good strip needs a good story. If your game simply consists of a series of bang-bang encounters followed by a congratulation sequence then you haven't got a real story. Early comic games like Questprobe's Spiderman were pretty heavy on story – a pity they weren't heavy on gameplay as well.

Check out this spread for the rest of the story...



One technique to identify your game with the original comic production is simply to borrow the artwork lock, stock, and barrel. Unfortunately, comic frames aren't designed with interaction in mind, so they tend to end up as intros to game sections. Here are three examples of static screens: two strangely similar ones from Dredd and Rogue and from Ranx.

THE GAMES

RANX
Ubisoft
ST, Amiga, PC £24.99 Imminent
C64 £9.99cs • £14.99dk

Ranx punches his way through a decaying urban environment, accompanied by a slick user interface that enables you to interrogate bystanders and carry on limited encounters. The atmosphere of the game is a reasonable reflection of the original but the effervescent originality of the strip hero is heavily compromised by extreme lack of originality in the punch/kick/grab scenario. The storyline, concerning plague medicine, is more complex than some other games in this selection but fails to compromise for the otherwise standard fare.

ROGUE TROOPER
Krisalis
ST/Amiga £24.99 Imminent

Slick beat-em-up arcade adventure as you escape from the Norts in an episode from the infamous 2000AD Nu-Earth futuristic war scenario. The slickness, however, hasn't contributed much in the way of originality and the colourful graphic design is rather a long way from the nihilistic atmosphere of the original. However, the programming here is certainly on a par with the best of the rest and the game combines some scrolling flight sequences with punch-ups and simple object-based puzzles. Nothing in the game, however, that really tells you much about the principal hero.

JUDGE DREDD
Virgin
Spectrum, C64, CPC $14.99 dk • £9.99cs
Amiga, ST £19.99 Imminent

Does a reasonable job of capturing some of the graphic humour of the popular 2000AD series – witness the Fatties in the screenshot elsewhere – and the backdrops seem suitably Mega City One-ish. Dredd can walk or mount his bike as he patrols the city and busts up crime situations by achieving simple gameplay objectives. The idea of keeping down the crime rate and blasting the perps is in tune with our hero, but this good news is drastically devalued by the gameplay which varies from the frustrating to the obvious but rarely seems even vaguely inspired. Neat packaging (e.g. Dredd's personal computer log-on sequence at the beginning) save this from total disaster.

SPIDERMAN
Empire
PC, Amiga, ST, C64, Spectrum, CPC £TBA

Jet Set Willy for 1990, but with a wall-creeping, web-slinging hero. Despite the appallingly outdated game style, in which you solve puzzles in a series of rooms before a final confrontation, the animation and control of Spidey really does conjure up some of the original excitement. Being able to walk along the ceiling also makes for some slightly more interesting puzzles. The graphic style isn't that Spidermannish, however, and the central sprite, although attractive in motion, is too small to carry graphic conviction.

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE
Kingsoft

Release details to be announced.
Still only in demo stage, but the graphics are large and very much in the original style. An unknown at the time of going to press...

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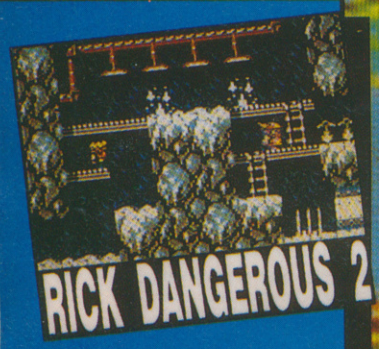

RICK DANGEROUS 2

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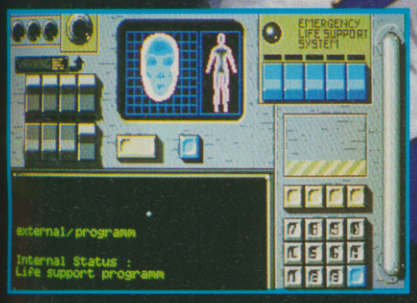

Everything was running like clockwork on the orbital station PEGASUS. The discrete vibration of the apparatus assured the eight members of the staff concentrating on their experiments. Calm stillness everywhere... until the discovery of the first victim. Then the adventure tumbled into horror.

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WARNING: Because ACS copies all Amiga software it's use to copy and distribute commercial software is illegal.

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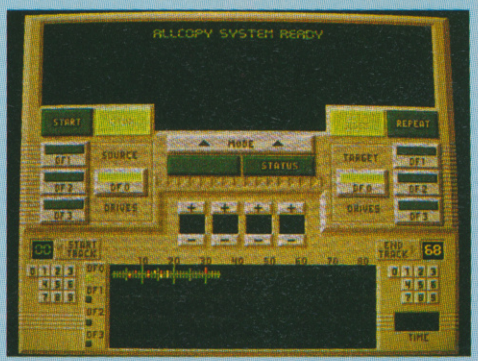

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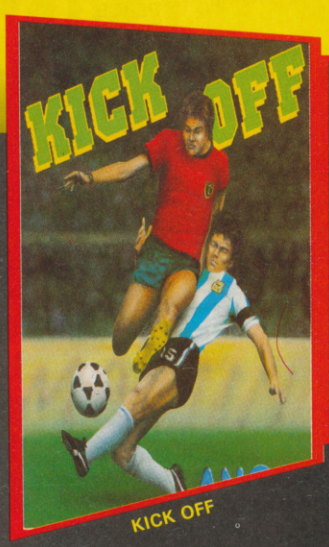
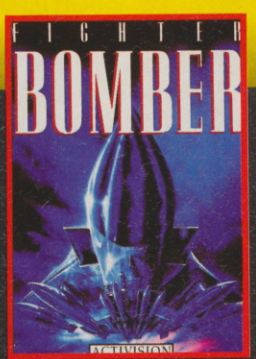
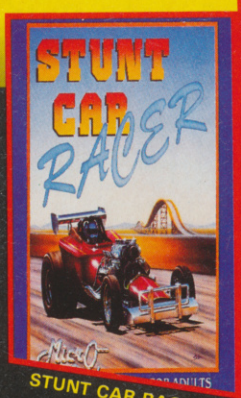


KICK OFF

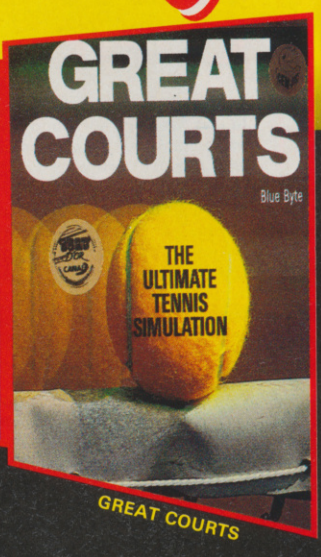
SUPERSKI



FIGHTER BOMBER



STUNT CAR RACER



GREAT COURTS

Available on ATARI ST, AMIGA, IBM PC and compatibles, COMMODORE 64, SPECTRUM and AMSTRAD CPC.
NOTE 1! KICK OFF is not avaible in the PC version.
NOTE 2! In the SPECTRUM version STUNT CAR RACER and SUPERSKI are replaced by CARRIER COMMAND, P 47 and RICK DANGEROUS.

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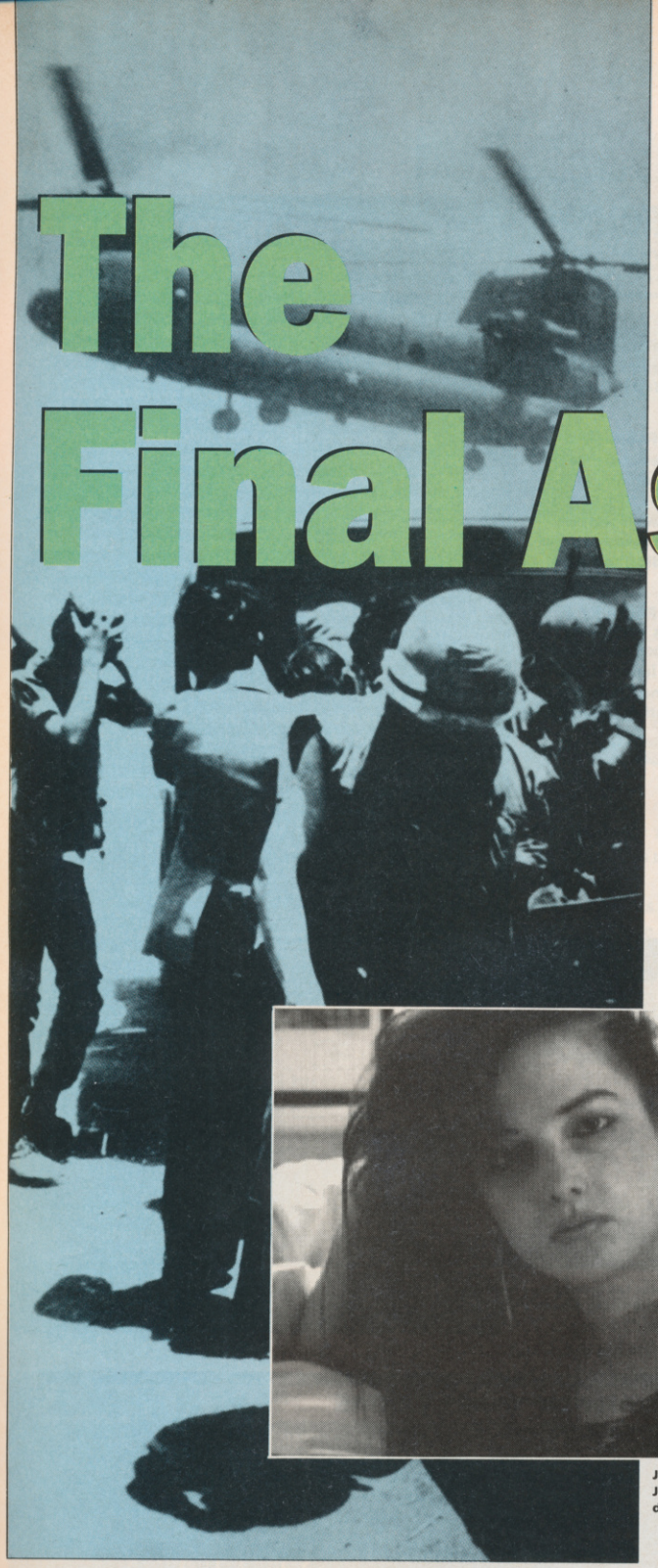
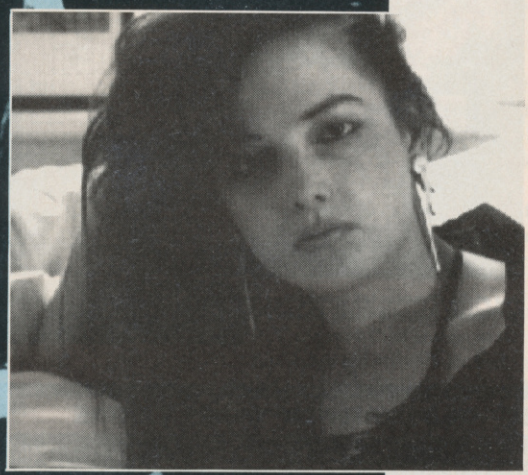
The Final Assault

Games designer Matthew Stibbe concludes his mini-series on the design and coding of Domark's *'Nam*





Janine Hodgson-Jones, graphic designer for *'Nam*

"And it's one, two, three, what are we fighting for?
I don't give a damn,
Next stop is Vietnam..."
Country Joe Macdonald

Last month I described how I went about designing Domark's *'Nam*. This month, as promised, I'll cover some of the technical issues that came up during the game's implementation.

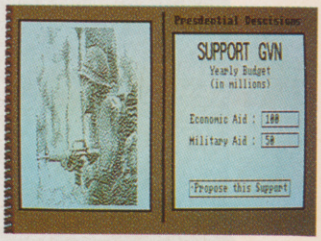
In my last article I described the problem of designing a coherent and intuitive metaphor for a game. *'Nam* uses the idea of a Presidential report including all the information needed to make decisions, a newspaper, and maps. The player makes presidential decisions by entering details into this report. Apparently even this was too complicated for President Reagan, who had to have video presentations and who made his decisions by ticking in boxes marked 'approved' or 'disapproved'! The military decisions are made by interaction with the map. It is easy enough to say all this in a game design document, but how to implement it?

This was the question I faced in early June of this year when I began programming the first Macintosh version of the game. I approached the problem by designing a prototype using 'Hypercard' which allows you to place graphics, text, scrolling lists, buttons and editable text on hypertext-linked 'cards'. Using this, and the graphics that Janine Hodgson-Jones had prepared beforehand, I came up with a working prototype that looked very much like the current version of the game.

I then took this 'stack' (as a Hypercard file is known) as a model, and implemented in 'C' (*Think C V4.0* to be precise) all the basic user interface items that I had used in the prototype. This meant that I had to re-implement scrolling lists, buttons, text from scratch. Luckily the Mac ROM's give you a lot of help, if you don't mind reading the 2000+ pages of 'Inside Macintosh' (I cheated because I have Apple's CD-ROM version which is much quicker than looking things up in the paper version's five volumes). Nevertheless the code for the user interface came to about 150k of source code, including all the code to buffer the screen so that redrawing appears instantaneous.

As I have been programming the Mac for over three years in *Object Pascal* and *MacApp* (a brilliant Smalltalk like object oriented environment for the Mac with another 2000+ page manual!) I tried to make the code interface to this set of user interface building blocks as 'object-orientated' as possible. This means that it is possible to define as many screens and with as many different user interface bits and pieces as I wanted simply by giving short descriptions of what I wanted and where it should be. Some screens can be described in less than a dozen lines of code.

I originally designed and tested the models for the game in *Excel* (a Mac and PC based spreadsheet). I updated the models and tested the further using a fantastic programme called *Stella* which makes it very easy to model the kind of complex dynamic models used in *'Nam* or *Imperium*. Programming the models was therefore simply a matter of taking the formulae from *Stella* and expressing them in C.



Even President Nixon dictated military strategy by ticking boxes on the reports from his advisers!

While the Mac version was being developed I recieved a great deal of help and advice from a small group of Beta testers, who were never slow with constructive criticism. I am sure the game is better for the help, but any faults that remain are, of course, mine! All the beta testing was carried our using Applelink and CIX (both electronic conferencing systems – Applelink is Apple's own network) to store test files, and to exchange comments about the game. Often I would upload the latest version at 7pm, and there would be comments on it by 9!

The PC version was started when the Mac version was nearly complete. I worked with another PC programmer, until he fell ill, and I had to complete that version by myself.

It was programmed using *Microsoft C V.6.0*. The biggest problem that confronted me with the PC version was how to re-implement the user interface code without using up loads of memory (which is at a premium on a PC thanks to DOS), and, more importantly, without spending days wrestling with video cards and screen modes.

Microsoft Windows, which initially I preferred, was ruled out because of the cost of bundling the four disk run-time version. After some searching and desperation(!) I struck upon a software library called 'Metawindows'. Amazingly, this provides device independant graphics for the PC, and even more impressively does so using function calls that correspond parameter by parameter with the Mac equivelents. Thanks to this, programming the user interface on the PC took about two months. At first we used different coordinate systems for different screen modes - 640x480 in 16 colours for VGA, 640x200 mono for CGA and so on.

Once I added all the models and combat code, there was no room for the two offscreen buffers that I had used in the Mac version when running VGA. With some reluctance, I decided to adopt a universal 640x200 in all modes, simply varying the colour depth to suit the graphics card. This makes it easier to do some things, but having achieved a working VGA version it was disappointing to have prune the programme like this. If anyone wants a VGA version that flickers, perhaps they might like to write me! Just Kidding!

Luckily there are no such memory problems on the Mac, and so the Mac version will run in 256 colours on a 640x480 screen if you have the memory, otherwise it will run in mono in progressively smaller windows.

I cannot speak for Colin Boswell of the Kremlin who is working on the ST and Amiga versions of the game, suffice to say that I have seen the work in progress and it seems as faithful an implementation of the original as is possible, and that he is trying to take advantage of the individual machines where possible (for example using gadgets on the Amiga version).

Finally, I must add that I was sustained throughout the long development of this game by copious amounts of coffee, the wonderful source code management tools of Apple's Mac Programmer's Workshop, and (of course) a very scratchy tape of the Woodstock concert from the 60's, and especially by the recording of Country Joe and the Fish!

SOBERING FACTS PT 1
Between 1961 and 1973, 47,244 US servicemen were killed and 303,704 wounded by direct enemy action.

SOBERING FACTS PT 2
4 generals, 8 colonels, and 61 Lt Colonels died in action.

SOBERING FACTS PT 3
65% of injuries came from shrapnel fragments, 16% from small arms fire. 86% of those wounded survived thanks to swift mede-vac and advanced medical facilities.

SOBERING FACTS PT 4
Booby traps and mines deprived 10,000 victims of one or more limbs – more than WW2 and Korea put together.

THE WHOLE SAD STORY CONTD.

1967 was a year of big battles, and marked a major U.S. offensive in the South. However, the doctrine of area warfare, limited numbers, and the mobility of the enemy meant that the army had little to show for its efforts in terms of captured ground, or moral victory. Instead it had bodycounts, and captured stores and weapons. The American people were told that these meant victory.

In 1968, these myths were exploded by the Tet offensive. This was in many ways as ineffective as the American attacks made the year before. It was not so much the communists abortive attempt to start a military assisted revolution in the South, but its ability to mount nationwide attacks in strength that astounded public opinion. In the end it was a military disaster for the communists, the V.C. ceased to be an effective fighting force, and had to be bailed out by more and more NVN regulars. However, it was a great political, moral and propaganda victory. If the south Vietnamese did not rise in support of the Communists it was not because of their support for the Saigon government, but because of their resignation - there had been war in SE Asia since the begining of the Second World War.

1969 marked a turnaround for the Americans. They began to look for a way to extract themselves from a war that was increasingly unpopular, and expensive. Indeed, many werte convinced by Tet that it was unwinnable. 1970 to 1972 marked the phased withdrawal of American ground forces, and the emphasis on Vietnamization, whereby the armed forces of the south were expanded and equipped, regardless of their chronic inability to fight. It was ineffect a sell out by the Americans, and I believe that they knew that South Vietnam would not long outlast the Peace treaty made in 1973. This, I think is borne out by the fact that no American assistance was forthcoming when South Vietnamese resistence crumbled when the North launched their final victorious offensive against the South in 1975.

One of the attractive full colour maps from the Mac version. You can dictate military strategy and tactics directly from these screens

FIGHTING TALK – GLOSSARY OF 'NAM TERMS

Airmobility The use of helicopters to move troops

Airstikes Airborne indirect firepower

Arclight A strike by B52 bombers - 3 bombers could flatten an area of 5 square km's

ARVN Army of the Republic of Vietnam, army of SVN

B52's Strategic nuclear bombers converted to carry up to 82,000 lbs of bombs

Battalion See division

Brigade See division

Commitment A measure of material commitment, and hence political commitment to the war by all sides

Corps area Pronounced 'core', these were the military regions of South Vietnam, starting with I Corps (pronounced 'eye-core'!) in the North and IV Corps in the South.

Division A division comprises 3 brigades, which in turn comprise three battalions. Each subordinate unit has its own HQ (NLF), in the case of the US HQ elements have been divided into their subordinate units. A name such as 1/2/12, would indicate the first battalion of the 2nd brigade of the 12 division.

FWA Free World Allies, units of SEATO countries that fought in S. Vietnam

Game turn The shortest game turn lasts one week.

Ho Chi Minh The leader of NVN (trans (I think) "the one who enlightens")

Ho Chi Minh Trail Supply lines through Laos and Cambodia to SVN, from the North

I Corps The northernmost military region - pronounced (eye - core)

II Corps The area containing the central highlands

III Corps Area containing Saigon

IV Corps The southernmost area of South Vietnam, mostly marsh, and rice paddies.

Indirect firepower Firepower coming from outside the combat zone - from naval, air, or artillery gunfire

IndoChina The area of SE Asia - includes Cambodia Laos and the two Vietnams

Khe Sanh US combat base, in the highlands of I Corps, also siege of Khe Sanh, in 1968

My Lai Massacre of civilians, by US troops under Lt. Calley

NVN North Vietnamese (the communists!), also their army

Outrages Events that are unpopular, and probably immoral - like My Lai

Pacification US and SVN program, to 'convert' the peasants - in the game the process of working out population control

Rangers A type of US infantry unit

RAR Royal Australian Regiment

Regular VC These were the VC units that did most of the fighting, smaller VC units were confined to guerilla operations

Reserves A pool of troops, raised like ordinary units, used to replace combat losses - a way of representing the political cost of casualties

ROK Republic of Korea

Scenario A set of data that will recreate the circumstances, in game turns, of a particular historical incident

Search and Destroy Name of standard US military tactic - speaks for itself

Stack A group of units operating together

Strategic bombing Bombing of the North and the trail by both B52's and tactical bombers

SVN South Vietnam also in this document the government of SVN

Tet An offensive launched by the Communists, on the Tet holiday 1968

Trail See Ho Chi Minh Trail

Unit A military unit, in game terms the smallest is a battalion the largest a division.

VC Viet Cong (trans:Vietnamese Communists) -SVN guerillas, sponsored by NVN

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Now, with the release of the Atari and Amiga versions reviewers are reaching for their dictionaries to find new superlatives. ZERO described the game as 'totally excellent', the sound as 'absolutely brilliant' 89%; Your Amiga rated it 'the best soccer simulation to date – 95%'; YC World Cup Winner 97%.

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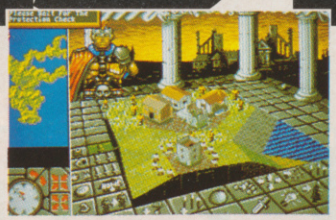
SCREEN TEST



Powermonger: following the exclusive ACE preplay in issue 37, the finished version is reviewed on page 59

ACE RATED!

Question: Is this game really going to grab me? And for how long?
Answer: the PIC curve – the heart of the **ACE Rating System.**

The PIC – *Predicted Interest Curve*
– is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.

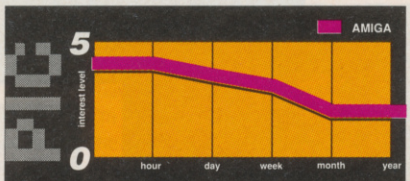
We on ACE know you don't just play a game – you experience it. The Predicted Interest Curve is the only review system that takes this all-important factor into account.

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...

For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look fantastic and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbours – who probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute anyway.

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

Finally, you've got the month and year ratings. The better a game holds up here the more deserving it is of your hard earned cash.



The packaging and presention are mediocre, but after a few minutes the depth of gameplay really bites. Unfortunately a repetitive challenge means it's downhill from there on...

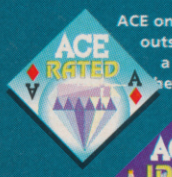
- **The very fast multi-level parallax scrolling**
- **Excellent sound effects in the dentist's waiting room**
- **Gameplay in the 3D maze Barbican section**

- **Limited use of objects**
- **Over-frequent disk access**
- **Colour combinations in the bedroom scene**

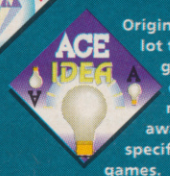
We won't rate a game unless it represents what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Preplay verdict panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished game will follow in a later issue.

ACE AWARDS

ACE always awards seals of approval for outstanding software performance. If a game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire – in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses: you have been warned!

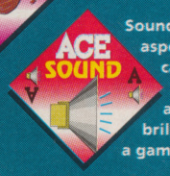


ACE only awards this one to games of outstanding quality. A 900+ game is a classic title, recommended without hesitation.



Originality counts for a lot these days, and any games that have it deserve a special mention. This ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.

One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that redefine the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.



Sound is the 'forgotten' aspect of games – but can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to brilliant use of audio in a game.

THE LINE UP

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Our first previews of Super Famicom titles, plus just how good IS the Neo Geo...?

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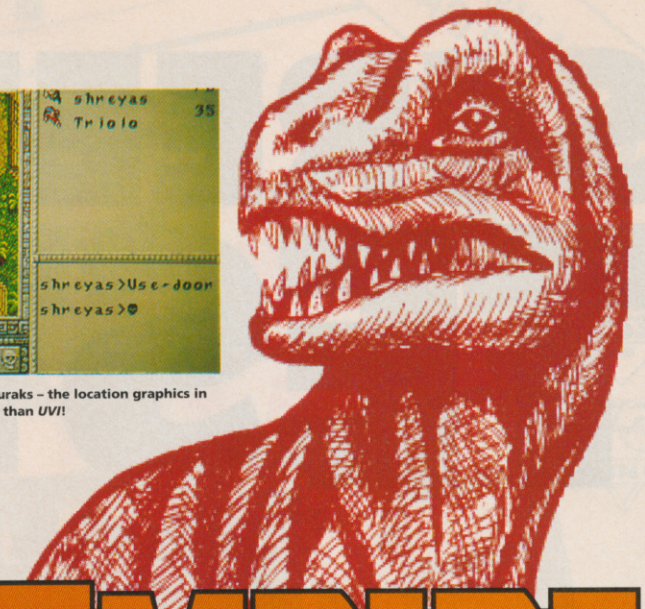
111 **LIVING BOOKS** *CDTV*

In the village of the friendly Kuraks – the location graphics in *Savage Empire* are even better than *UVI*!



SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin must be developing a strong claim to the Software House of the Year Award. First, *Ultima VI* transformed the Ultima series with yet another quantum leap in playability. Then Chris '*Bad Blood*' Roberts brought us the superlative *Wing Commander* and now – can you take it? – they've delivered another masterpiece. The only problem is going to be convincing you that it's as good as it is...

The problem's a real one and it arises because of the prejudices that many gamesplayers have about *Ultima*–style games. These prejudices fall into two categories. The first is based on actual personal experience of early *Ultimas*. These were graphically hideous and had extended, but very obscure, gameplay. You either loved them or loathed them. The second category belongs to people who lump *Ultima* games together with other pseudo-RPG and fantasy titles and who would rather get stuck into a more active scenario.

Can this be true?? An *Ultima* game that's... gasp!...even BETTER than *Ultima?!* Yup...ORIGIN have come up with another fantasia of graphics, gameplay and long-term addiction

The first category are missing out because the games have changed beyond all recognition. The second category are just missing out, period. Here's why...

A quick glimpse of the intro – the end of a stunning slow scroll through the jungle! Welcome to the Savage Empire!

Aha! Lord British, you presume. The true sign of a great story-telling system is when the characters reappear in different roles with no hint of tedious deja vu. And that's what you've got here...

THE ELEMENTS

What do you get in a game like *Savage Empire*? First, you get the *Ultima VI* software engine. This gives you a scrolling map window of considerable graphic complexity, the ability to create and store game characters complete with their appearance and all statistics, a powerful icon-driven interface, and the capacity to process vast amounts of gameplay data. This engine can drive BIG games.

Gameplay consists of leading your 'party' (which may consist of between one and six members) around the landscape, entering buildings (displayed in high resolution right down to the cups on the tables) and encountering people much as you would do in real life. Unlike other games, these characters don't just sit there like parts of the furniture – under constant computer control every one of them is leading his/her own life and moving about the world just as you are.

When you encounter someone you can either ignore them, chat with them, or fight them. Again, these options are not just IGNORE, CHAT, FIGHT as they would be in some other games we could mention – these options are powerful and complex. If you communicate, the other person may well have a lot to say and highlighted words in the text prompt you with subjects for further discussion. Characters may set quests, offer information, simply pass the time of day, solve puzzles for you, or even join your party and place themselves entirely under your control. You can't afford to ignore anyone.

COMBAT

Sooner or later you're going to bump into someone (or something) you don't like, or who doesn't

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Here are just some of things to check out in *Savage Empire*:

- **Shamuru and Triolo**
  A couple of friends with suspiciously familiar sounding names. Can these be Shamino and Iolo from Britannia?
- **Aiela**
  A beautiful princess of the Kurak tribe. Yup, you're in love.
- **Toporu the Mad**
  He lives on an island and thinks his mind is a little blue rock. What's he been taking?
- **Urali Swamplands**
  There's a particularly unpleasant pet kept here by the Urali – a tyrannosaur. You have to get past him – and past the charming man-eating thingies in the lake
- **Yunapotli**
  Yay! A robot! Just when we thought the whole world was swarming with nothing but dinosaurs, bloodthirsty tribesmen, and creepy crawlies, we get a real Tin Man. Put him together again and he may reveal the secrets of the Underground Empire that built him.

OTHER ULTIMAS

Since Origin seem to be THE software house around at the moment (*Wing Commander, Savage Empire*, and *Ultima VI* all in one year!), the question of format conversions is pretty important. Good news then, that Mindscape have established a European conversion team at the Origin headquarters specifically to cater for those of us the other side of the pond.

***Ultima V*, which we reported as a 950-rated Amiga update recently, was unfortunately delayed prior to final release but should be available as you read this. Amiga versions of *Ultima VI* and *Savage Empire* are under way – though the former needs to be finished before the latter can make much progress. CDTV and ST owners will not be neglected either – and expect more Ultima-type products for consoles too.**

Close to a window, the roof 'dissolves' and you can see inside – otherwise the interior remains a dark secret

Having a tussle with a Deinonychus. Methinks you and nouveau-Iolo should get the hell out of there!

like you. In this case, you're into combat mode. Each of your party is directly under your control during fight sequences unless you have previously set their combat status to include default tactics. There are four default tactics settings for characters in Savage Empire: CHARGE (rushes in and attacks nearest enemy); RETREAT (cops out); RANGE (stay back and used ranged weapons); and COMMAND (under player's command at all times).

A bout ends either when you or your opponents manage to flee/leave the area or when one party is destroyed. During combat you manoeuvre your party individually, concentrating on selected opponents that you choose according to the particular strengths and weaknesses of your own characters. You get frequent reports telling you how badly (or how well) the opposition are taking it. If you've been put off in the past by the sort of RPG fight routines in, for example, *Bards Tale* then check out *Savage Empire* because the system is infinitely better.

THE STORYLINE

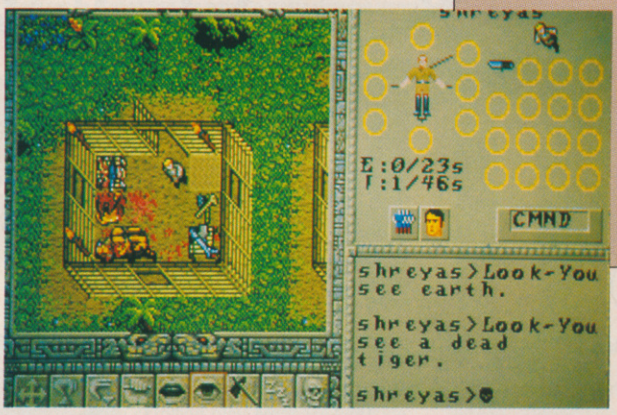
If there's one thing the *Ultima* software engine is perfectly designed for, it's telling stories. *Ultima* had some pretty complex narrative lines and it's a tribute to the system that *Savage Empire* comes across as being a completely different game. The story, with this software, is everything...

In this game, you enter into a classic Conan Doyle (Lost World, Allan Quartermain – yeah, you remember them...you're not that young) style. There's initially some continuity with the *Ultima* series as you return from Britannia and meet up with a boffin who could help you unravel the secret of the moonstone you've returned with.

Oops! As plot would have it, there's a big bang and you find yourself with the Prof and a local journalist in a steaming jungle. A few yards away a doe-eyed beauty (that's Aiela), who you've been having exotic dreams about, is about to be gobbled up by something that looks distinctly pteranodonnish.

Naturally you save her tender bacon, but shortly after your hearthrob is (of course) snatched away by a positive brute of fellow called Darden the Huge. When you come to after your confrontation with the chappie, you find that your friends and your lover are gone...

You're then faced with miles of jungle, ancient civilisation, giant ants, lizardmen, underground cities, and other delights. Go forth, get killed, enjoy...



◄ You've entered a hut and someone seems to have slaughtered a tiger. Time to fill your inventory (top right) by checking out the pile of objects in the corner

EXPLORATION

Exploration, like combat and interaction, is another extended opportunity for those of you used to simply wandering about a sparse map and grabbing the objects that litter the landscape. In *Savage Empire* the locations are not only graphically superb but are also choc-a-bloc with detail.

Not only is there lots to check out, but the various objects and larger items can all be manipulated, investigated, traded, used, repositioned and so on.

IN PLAY

The incredible thing about *Savage Empire* is that, in play, it's even better than *Ultima*. I suspect this may be something of a subjective subject (!) but I'm certain that for most people the scenario of the game is going to be vastly more approachable than the normal fantasy RPG set-ups we've had in the past. Even games like Wasteland, which have had wider appeal, have lost out because the scenarios have been killed off by the impenetrable game play and RPG jargon. You don't get any of that in *Savage Empire* – you just get a rollicking good yarn and a very meaty game system.

As a dedicated *Ultima* fan, I have to admit that I'm pretty taken aback by *Savage Empire*. I'd imagined a rather pale imitation of the previous games but instead Origin have come up with a winner. Even the close-up scrolling map, which I didn't like as much in *UVI* as the small scale display in *UV*, works better in Savage Empire. That's anyone who knows their way round Britannia will constantly feel hampered by the narrow field of view in *UVI* and be wondering where they are. In *Savage Empire* it's a whole new world and the large scale simply brings the experience closer.

Somehow, I found fighting dinosaurs and natives a lot more interesting than struggling with supernatural gargoyles. There's also far more variety in the social structures of *Savage Empire* than there is in *Ultima*.

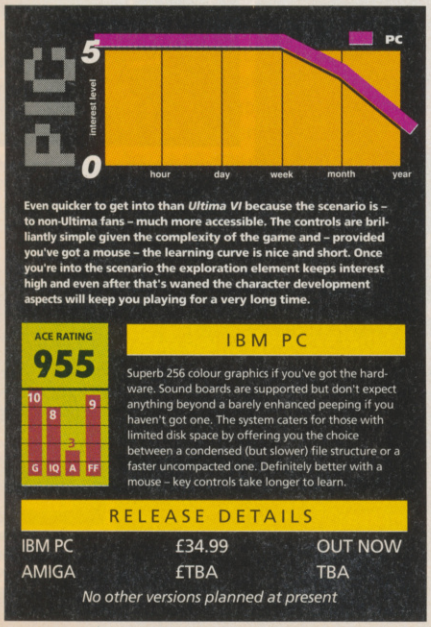
This is a winner. I'm going native.

● Steve Cooke

Isn't she dishy? The pteranodons certainly think so. You're own motives, of course, are entirely chivalrous

MARTIAN WORLD

Having seen how successful this reusing of the Ultima system has been, we were particularly pleased to hear that the next game in the *Worlds of Ultima* series should be available by next Easter. Called *Martian World*, it features a B-movie sci-fi scenario set on your favourite fantasy planet. Early reports say the storyline is excellent – stand by for more news in next month's ACE



Even quicker to get into than *Ultima VI* because the scenario is – to non-Ultima fans – much more accessible. The controls are brilliantly simple given the complexity of the game and – provided you've got a mouse – the learning curve is nice and short. Once you're into the scenario the exploration element keeps interest high and even after that's waned the character development aspects will keep you playing for a very long time.

ACE RATING **955**

IBM PC

Superb 256 colour graphics if you've got the hardware. Sound boards are supported but don't expect anything beyond a barely enhanced peeping if you haven't got one. The system caters for those with limited disk space by offering you the choice between a condensed (but slower) file structure or a faster uncompacted one. Definitely better with a mouse – key controls take longer to learn.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£34.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£TBA	TBA

No other versions planned at present

Sullivan Bluth Presents

DRAGON'S LAIR II TIME WARP

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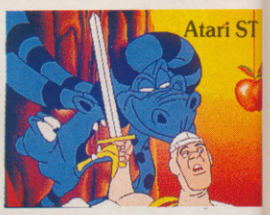

Princess Daphne has been spirited away to a wrinkle in time by the evil wizard Mordroc who plans to force her into marriage. Only you, Dirk the Daring, can save her.

Transported by a bumbling old time machine, you begin the rescue mission. But you must hurry, for once the Casket of Doom has opened, Mordroc will place the Death Ring upon Daphne's finger in marriage and she will be lost forever in the Time Warp.

Be the first to play the all new Don Bluth animated adventure! Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp features full-screen animation and digitized sound with more scenes than any previous animated adventure.

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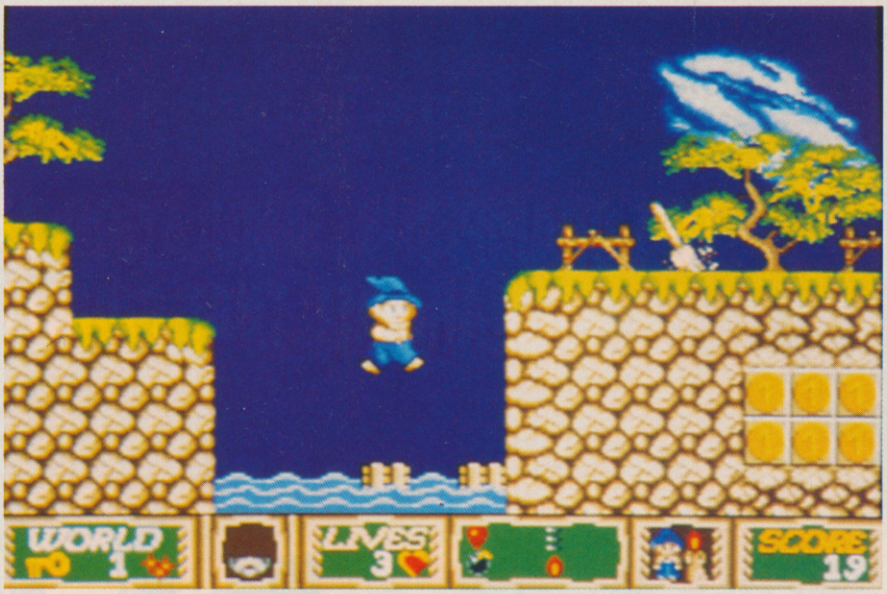
ReadySoft In

The only new feature in the game. This little guy has a limited life span, but can get into all manner of places unreachable by any other means.



Boxes can be pushed into the water to create stepping stones, handy when crossing large tracts of water.

APPRENTICE

Rainbow Arts are looking for promotion – the hard way!

The story of *Apprentice* is one of woe, great loss and repressed ambition. You, being nothing more than a mere wizard's aide, have always wanted to become a grand master of magic. However, you are far too young. The wizards will let you try, but to prove your worth, you have to seek out a great dragon, and reclaim the book of secrets that he stole so long a go. The path is perilous, taking you over and under land and sea, as well as a short jaunt through hell for good measure.

Everybody and everything is against you in this game. Not a very nice thing to be told, but it's true. The wizards have decided to help you a little, by scattering packing crates about the place that can be kicked or thrown at the enemies. Some of them hide secret treasures, such as money or magical bonuses that allow you to float like a leaf, or create an animated controllable model of yourself.

Against you are all manner of nasties ranging from the very slow and simple hedgehogs to rampaging broomsticks that have a nasty habit of throwing your boxes back at you. There are also all kinds of traps laying about the place, collapsing platforms and water-filled holes to name but two. You've no way of telling where most of these are, so the game has to be learned.

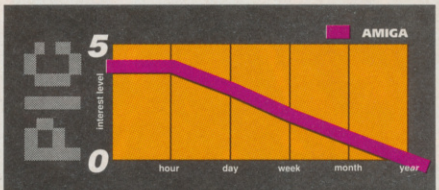
Each of the thirty four levels is composed of large, four-way scrolling play areas viewed side on, a la *Super Mario Brothers*, At one end is the start location, at the other is the exit. There are a million and one different routes across the level, but the easiest one is marked with fruit. A helpful inclusion on the later levels, which really are nothing more than complicated mazes.

The controls are very well thought out indeed. Depending on which spells you've collected, the fire button plays a different role at different times. For example, if you are holding or stood next to a box, you'll either throw or kick it. However, if you are not in either of those categories and have collected some bombs, the button will place one directly in front of you.

Another nice gameplay feature is the ability to change direction while jumping. This allows you to adjust your trajectory in mid flight, changing the lengths and heights of your jumps and even looping backward. Handy in more than a few situations.

On the face of it, *Apprentice* doesn't break any barriers. Indeed, it may well get lost in the wash of console-style games – a breed this definitely fits right into – by being a little too ordinary. A fun game to play, but by no means an outstanding product.

● Tony Dillon



Attractive screen and music intro the game nicely, and to start with, things set off really well. The game plays well and there's enough of a challenge to keep you going. But not frantically or over enthusiastically. It's the game's complete lack of anything spectacular that marrs your excitement in the end, which is a shame because otherwise it's quite a nice product.

ACE RATING
685

G IQ A FF

AMIGA

Commodore's pride and joy is worthy of a lot better than this. Granted the sprites are attractive – but not overly so – and the scrolling is very smooth. There are a few happy in-game tunes, but the sound FX are far too flat. The only part of the game that is remotely original is the little player that pops out of your trousers, and the novelty of that wears off not long after the crude jokes.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£19.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

Collected money is spent, where else, in the shop. Here you can buy energy supplies, weapons and balloons, just like Woolworths!

The balloons can be used as lifts to higher platforms. You can't stay on them for long, though, as the air escapes pretty quickly

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BUCK ROGERS

COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY

S.S.I. give you the chance to join Buck Rogers and the rebels of NEO in the struggle against RAM domination

The year is 2456 and humanity has colonised most of the solar system, terraforming the planets to suit his needs. Power lies with three international alliances, which – following the "The Last Gasp War" – have replaced national governments. Luna is owned by the Euro-Bloc faction, Venus by the Indo-Asian Consortium and Mars, seat of power among the inner worlds, by the despotic Russo-American Mercantile (RAM).

Earth, however, is in a bad way. Ruled for decades with cruel efficiency and an iron fist, mass pollution and war have taken their toll. In response, NEO [the New Earth Organisation] has been formed by a daring band of rebels to combat RAM's tyranny.

As fate and plot structure would have it, Buck Rogers is recovered alive from his frozen sleep and with his tactical genius and fearless daring he soon leads NEO to victory over RAM, who leave Earth after it becomes too expensive. Although NEO is now in control, RAM still attacks and, with a full invasion imminent, our heroes are desperate to build a defence force.

The game is in a similar vein to S.S.I.'s *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*, *Buck Rogers* being the computer incarnation of TSR's role-playing game of the same name. The action starts with character generation. Each character has seven abilities (strength, dexterity, charisma etc) which are in turn modified by that character's racial characteristics. For example Martians (actually engineered earthlings for Mars) get a -1 modifier to their CON and STR values, but +1 to DEX and CHA. Other races include Terrans, Venusians, Mercurians, Tinkers and Desert Runners.

The next step is to pick a career class, the selection ranging from Rocketjocks to Engineers – all have minimum ability requirements and are open to only some of the races.

To personalise your character you allocate 80 skill points between various skills and advancement is achieved via the collection of experience points. Each time a character goes up a level you get an extra 40 points to add to any of his/her skills. With more than fifty to choose from you can create a varied party, ready for anything!

Combat occurs quite often and is fairly easy to get to grips with. Viewed from slightly above, you control colourful sprites which attack in a set order depending on initiative. This is a random value number modified by various factors including dexterity and surprise.

A varied arsenal is available although you start off with standard Bolt Guns, but as you progress you can upgrade to the likes of Laser Rifles and Plasma Throwers. Also possible is space combat. This too is controlled by a selection of menus, ramming being an option which can then be followed by boarding. To take a ship you must secure both the bridge and engineering sections. All booty is then yours and the team is credited with the salvage value. This account is used for ship repairs, fuel, and other necessities.

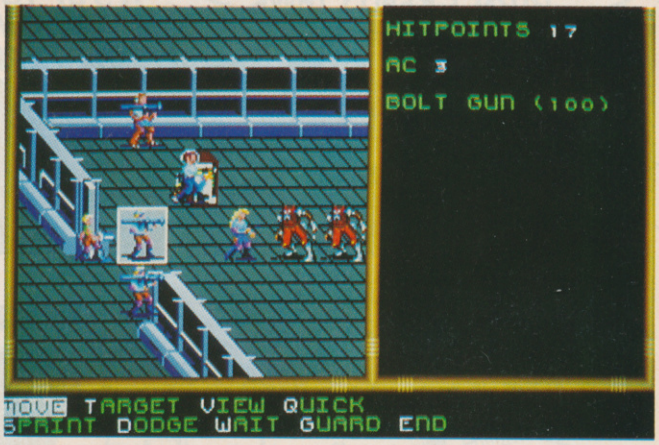
There are many locations ranging from Martian deserts to cavernous spaceships and all are inhabited in one form or another, some being hostile and others friendly. Control of your party's actions is via a series of menus with movement achieved by clicking the mouse on various parts of the 3D view.

All the views are clearly presented with good shading and colours that help build the atmosphere. Most of the major locations are introduced with some really impressive pictures that further give the feel of the 25th century. Sounds include the usual PC beeps and whines although soundboards are catered for .

No-one expects a computer to beat a human RPG GM, but Buck Rogers succeeds superbly in its own right and is an excellent addition to the genre.

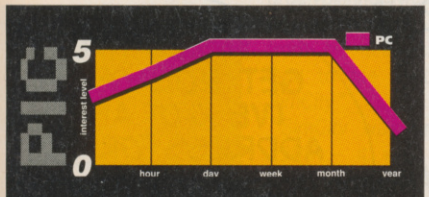
● Khalid Howladar

Upon entering a room you are attacked by the evil RAM Terrines....



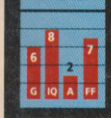
...and a fierce fight ensues.

Just one of the numerous atmospheric screens



Heavy going to begin with, like all computer RPG's, but after creating your party rather than using the default one, you take more interest as your combination of skills begins to determine the gameplay. After a few hours you really get involved and are trying to do everything possible to get more experiance points, so you can handle the nastier enemies. Won't keep you playing until the 25th century, but should keep you busy well into 1991.

ACE RATING
885



AMIGA

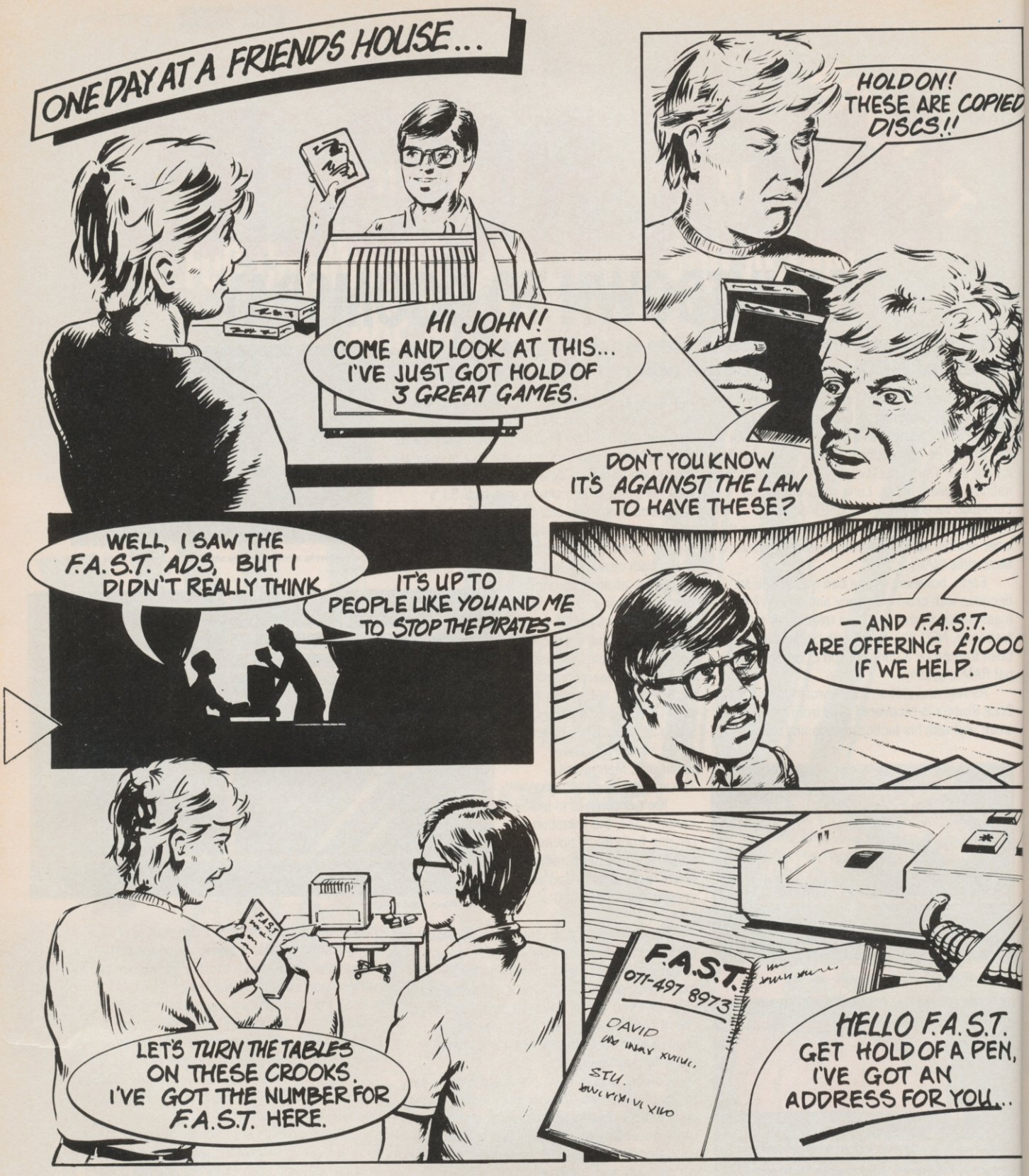
Most of the graphics are nicely done and some of the full screen pictures are excellent. That said, the combat graphics leave a lot to be desired with virtually no animation and in the odd cases some dire scenery. The game is well presented with a hefty box containing three disks, two manuals, and a Buck Rogers novel, which gets you more involved in the game.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£XX.XX	XXXXXXX
AMIGA	£XX.XX	XXXXXXX

No other versions planned

Victorious! You strike a small blow against the despotic RAM.



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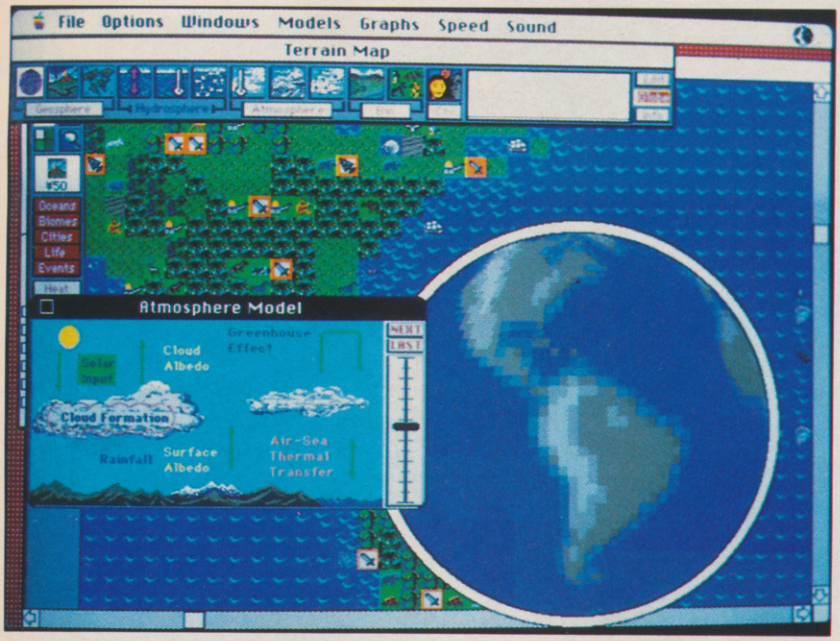


SimEarth

Get the Max

From the heart of Moraga in California, Maxis has produced some of the most original micro-computer software ever created. *SimCity*, the urban city simulation, and now *SimEarth* (can you manage a planet?) have taken the word 'micro-simulation' to a mass audience around the globe. Maxis products are now available on a variety of machines ranging from the Spectrum and Amiga to the FM Towns and Super Famicom. But how did it all begin? Jeff Braun, President of Maxis, explains:

"Maxis started in 1987, it's a partnership between Will Wright and myself. Before Maxis I was involved with productivity software on the Amiga but I just didn't see that going anywhere. I then met up with Will at a party. He'd already written *Raid on Bungeling Bay* (see panel for further details). Will designed all the graphics in *ROBB* and had a system set-up where he could just plop down factories and roads and build the islands you try to destroy in the game. While he was designing *Raid on Bungeling Bay* he decided it was more fun building the islands and cities than it was destroying them. This, coupled with the fact that his next-door neighbour just happened to be a knowledgeable urban-planner with a stack of computer-model data from his university days, lead to the neat idea of *SimCity*."

Will Wright, the creator of *SimCity*

"*SimCity* was finished in 1985 – it was originally called *Metropolis* on the C64 – but Will couldn't find a publisher, so we set-up Maxis and converted *SimCity* over to more adult-orientated machines like the Macintosh. *SimCity* is now available on the Spectrum, C64, CPC, Amiga, ST, PC, Macintosh, FM Towns, Sharp X68000 and NEC-9801. It will also be available on the Nintendo Entertainment System and Super Famicom in January 1991. [Nintendo has actually bought these licensing rights for a reputed one million pounds, though Jeff was unwilling to comment – ACE]. Before the Nintendo deal Maxis was just five people, now we've got over 35 people."

MAXIS

Where do you go after simulating the planet Earth? Rik Haynes talks to Maxis, the company that brought you *SimCity*, *SimEarth* and soon *SimCity2*...

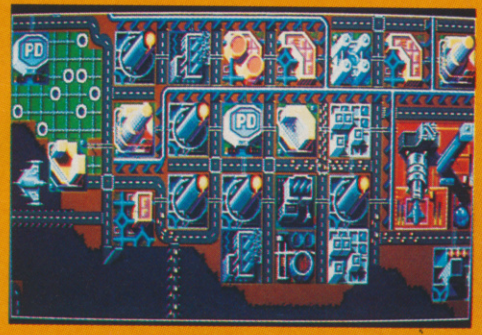
"The Super Famicom version of *SimCity* is being developed by the same team who created *Super Mario Bros. 3* - it's a beautiful product. The Super Famicom implementation will be the best version of *SimCity* with more 'gamey' features. It has animated ocean waves, a see-through menu-system, and gives user-defined names to objects in the cities like the ACE Suspension Bridge for example."

WILL THERE BE A FOLLOW-UP TO *SIMCITY*?

"As soon as *SimEarth* is finished, we're putting the same team on *SimCity2*. A lot of the features in *SimEarth* will appear in *SimCity2*. We'll have elevation – mountains and valleys. We're going to have a much bigger area and multiple cities, it will be almost like a county. We're not certain how these cities will interact yet, but we're talking about a multi-player ability, so you can be mayor in one city and your friend mayor in another. There will be some kind of conflicts where there's a county tax-rate, and one city might be industrialised and the other more commercial so there'll be some tradeoffs. The budget window's going to

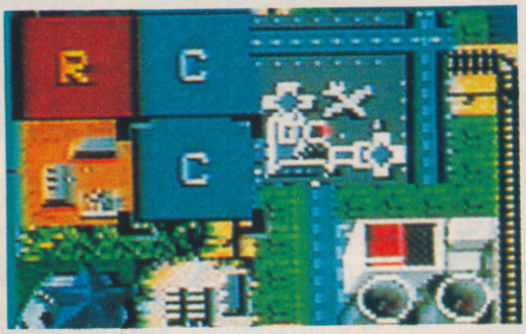
NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Maxis is introducing two packages of *SimCity Graphics* as add-ons to the original *SimCity*. *Graphic Set 1 - Ancient Cities* gives you Ancient Asia, Medieval Times and the Wild West. *Graphic Set 2 - Future Cities* provides Future USA, Future Europe and Moon Colony. In addition to building your own cities, you can superimpose each of the six venues on *SimCity's* pre-built and play wacky combinations like Moon Colony San Francisco, Wild West Tokyo and Medieval Detroit. These data disks cost £19.99dk each and are available for the Amiga, ST, PC, Macintosh and FM Towns.



SimEarth

Super Famicom version of *SimCity*.



SimCity on the Super Famicom.

be much bigger. It won't be just three services – you'll have things like managing the sewers, water supply and waste disposal. There will be education and schools. We'll also have freeways, roads, rail, light rail and heavy rail – so there'll be a lot more transportation. We're going to add a lot more city services so that it's more realistic. We're going to have multiple-layers such as subway, sewer, city and high-rise levels to the city. You'll be able to zoom through levels of the terrain."

"*SimCity2* will be set through time, you'll see the city evolve. You can play it in any time-scale, you can start in medieval times and work your city all the way up to future times. The graphics will change over the years. We'll put in more detailed information about the city, we'll have more statistics."

"With *SimCity2* we've opened up the model so you have these toggles where you can change variables. For instance, you can change the relationships between land-value and crime, traffic density and population. You can go in and try your own rules. We're working on the specs now. *SimCity2* will be a completely different type of game to its predecessor. It should be ready sometime next year."

WILL YOU ENHANCE THE CDTV VERSION OF *SIMCITY2*?

"Yes, we'd like to include some hypercard-type stacks in the CDTV version to give you a lot more information about the product. We'd also like to have experts who analyse the city for you – you'd also be able to ask them questions. We might commission some famous urban planners. For example, if the crime-rate is high they might tell you how to help the city combat it. We're looking at a lot of different ideas of how we can fully exploit the CD-environment. Hopefully we'll have more graphics as well."

SimCity has been nominated as the Best Contribution to Urban Planing in the United States by the American Planning Association.

Two mayors who were running for an election in a small town in America played _SimCity_ for a night to see who would get the best score.

Maxis will be working with Bullfrog (the creators of _Populous_ and _Powermonger_) in the future. You'll see something from them within the next year.

[Left] Jeff Braun (Maxis President), David Ward (boss of Ocean) and Gary Bracey (Ocean's teaboy).

The crazy guys at Maxis.

RAID ON BUNGELING BAY

The game that inspired Will Wright to create _SimCity_ is a very playable 360° scrolling shoot'em-up. This mid-80's C64 title – released by Broderbund – also requires a fair degree of strategic thought. During the game you pilot a helicopter on a mission to stop The War Machine by destroying the production of its six war factories. These heavily defended buildings are scattered across islands spanning an area of 100 screens. You have five helicraft to accomplish your mission, each carries an unlimited supply of missiles and nine bombs. You can repair and reload with bombs at any time by landing on your carrier - which you must also defend against attack. The bombs can hit everything except airborne targets, while the missiles destroys everything except the battleship and factories. The battleship is built on one of the islands during the course of the game. You can delay its construction by bombing it, but once it's built the battleship will put out to sea and head for your carrier. It eventually attacks and sinks your carrier if you don't sink it first. If your carrier is sunk, then the helicopter you're flying becomes your last and you cannot repair damage. You can still reload by finding bombs located on some of the islands. Apart from the battleship, The War Machine has a formidable arsenal of tanks, boats, anti-aircraft guns, fighter planes and radar installations, and bombers. Tanks and boats supply the factories and increase the rate of production, anti-aircraft guns cause heavy damage and normally protect factories and radar-posts. The fighter planes will chase and fire at you until you lose or eliminate them. The radar installations on the ground aid the fighters in locating you. Bombers occasionally attack your carrier, when this happens you receive a warning message and a limited amount of time to return to the carrier and shoot the bombers down before they sink your carrier. If you destroy all six factories, you see a newspaper headline story describing your victory. _Raid on Bungeling Bay_ is definitely an ACE Classic. If you see it, buy it. The game was one of the first licensed titles on the Nintendo Famicom console and sold over one million units in Japan.

4D SPORTS BOXING

"4D Sports Boxing is absolutely brilliant...the boxers move pretty much like their real-life counterparts ...Here goes. Ooooooof! (Crunch)."
ZERO HERO 90%

"...This is the best game I have ever played..."
-Don Mattrick, President of Distinctive Software Inc

"Seconds out...Round One! The crowd leap to their feet as the fighters rain down on each other...was that a stumble? YES! He's down...what a knock out. This is boxing at it's absolute best. What a brilliant fight"

"4D Sports Boxing is simply one of the best sports simulations around...Superb." -The One 90%

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POWERMONGER

Populous was billed by some as the ultimate God game – now ELECTRONIC ARTS step down from the dizzy heights of deity to wage war as a _Powermonger_

Previewed in issue 37, Powermonger may have been seen as the follow-up to the incredibly successful *Populous* - this is not the case. Programmed by Bullfrog, *Powermonger* is indeed a game of conquest and strategy, but places you in the role of an exiled warrior with twenty men under your command. You're out to establish yourself, having come ashore on strange and foreign (is)lands. To reach this somewhat formidable goal, you must successfully conquer each of the 195 areas that make up the world of *Powermonger*.

As you progress, the status of your leader (displayed as a large character behind the main play area) will vary according to the orders issued to each character under your control. As with *Populous*, each of these characters moves independently unless specifically commanded, although success inevitably depends upon certain orders being issued.

Unlike *Populous*, the range of controls does not extend to causing 'natural' disasters, revolving instead around husbandry (livestock, dependent plant-life), invention and the odd battle or two. Whilst earlier islands are relatively easily won by force, many inhabitants are less than prepared to submit, preferring to either trade, bribe or persuade in order to gain alliance - (which of these methods you should employ may be decided by spying on opponents to discover weaknesses or requirements) - for instance, other leaders may have advanced their weaponry and supplies beyond yours, when your own troops may be starving and inadequately armed.

You've just begun to establish yourself, and are waiting until your forces are strong enough...

... to strike! Hack! (the Herald Angels sing!) Laying waste to a settlement and sending souls skyward

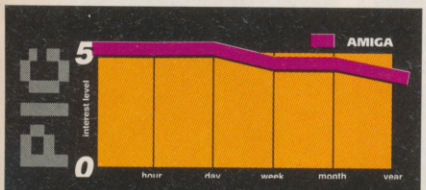
Before attempting any destruction, you must commission and equip an army. Having done so, you may then select from 3 levels of aggression (or posture), pick your destination, launch your attack and observe the resulting battle. A defeated captain will be directly under your command and may subsequently lead an independent body of followers to further your regime, (although orders are sent via pigeon, so take some time to be carried out).

Physical opponents aside, continually changing weather may wildly alter your intended course of action, or even render plans completely useless, (try mounting an attack during the winter and watch the driving snow discourage your armies to the point of desertion!) and coupled with various geographical structures, often pose considerable problems. For example, any attempt to attack from either an open plain or the top of a hill will see your chances of success decrease, as the enemy will have observed your intentions and preplanned defences. Alternatively, attacking from the cover of a forest or the brow of a hill increases your chances of success due to your having the element of surprise!

The complexity involved in producing the fully manipulable polygon landscapes that make up *Powermonger*'s 195 areas, must be regarded as an achievement. The zoom and rotate facilities are not only excellently implemented, but add an extra twist, allowing full views of each game aspect, geographical and otherwise. Icon control is easily learned, although mastering the game itself will take considerably longer. Graphically, *Powermonger* is in a class of its own. Not only are there thousands of independent characters (all well designed), but elemental disruptions and dozens of land formations combine to provide variety and maintain interest. Colour is appropriately used to enhance realistic scenery. Sound is both realistic and informative and nearby activities may be recognised aurally, so influencing a player's actions.

A sublime example of the art of computer gaming, and an essential purchase.

● Alex Ruranski

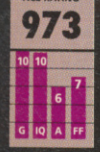


General appearance and techniques behind Powermonger keep PIC consistency high, with its enormity providing many, many hours of play. The dip towards a year comes as a result of possible repetitiveness - the same complaint some aimed at Populous. However, this will take some serious time to rear its head.

ACE RATING 973

AMIGA

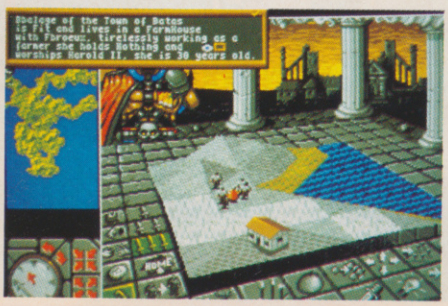
One of the few recent games that looks to have really tapped into the Amiga's potential. Aesthetically ahead of many games, with gameplay of a comparable nature.



RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£29.99	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£29.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned



Information may be gleaned about anything within the game. This guy in particular follows a rival - time to wage war...

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* N for Nintendo Entertainment System and F for Sega, Atari, Amstrad and Commodore game systems.

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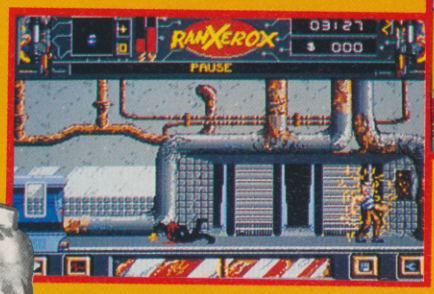
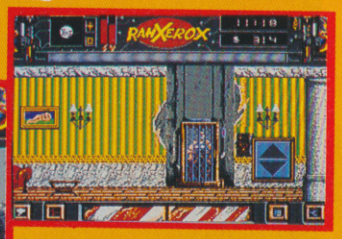
RANX

YOUR MOTHER WOULDN'T LIKE IT !





From Rome to New York, psycho-plague is taking its victims. The President of the United States, himself, is contaminated. You are Ranx, an android with muscles of steel, and only you can save the world. But, you are being tortured by something even worse. Your friend, Lubna, has disappeared and you want to find her at all costs.

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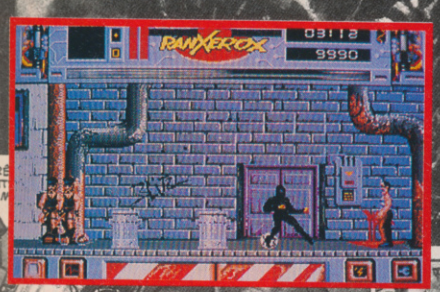
RANX BY LIBERATORE AND TAMBURINI

AVAILABLE FOR
ATARI ST
AMIGA
PC & COMPATIBLES



THE VIDEO GAME

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UBI SOFT
Entertainment Software

THE IMMORTAL

EA prove that sometimes dead is better

If I were to tell you that Will Harvey's (author of *Zany Golf* and *The Music Construction Set*) latest, *The Immortal*, was a top quality arcade adventure, you'd probably be very interested. If I were to tell you that it had, in the words of the guy who wrote the packaging blurb "movie-quality animations", no doubt your palms would sweat a fair bit. If I finally followed up by telling you that it only has around 50 locations, your enthusiasm would no doubt collapse in a sobbing heap. But if to you hardened gamesters out there, 50 screens seems like a pitifully small amount, let me tell you that this is no easy ride.

The plot is a standard one of goblins, underground mazes, rescue and magic scrolls. The game itself, however, is anything but standard. In terms of gameplay, design and presentation, *The Immortal* is in a class of its own.

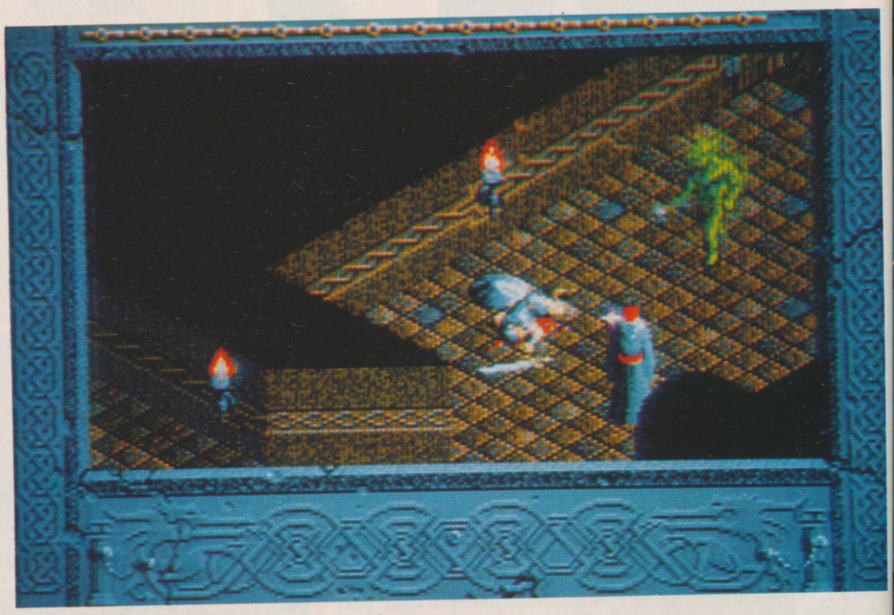
You are a wizard on a quest to find and rescue your teacher and master, the Grand Wizard Mordamir. The underground complex you have to travel through contains eight levels full of Goblins, Trolls, secret traps and all manner of puzzles, presented in isometric format. You begin the game totally unarmed magically, with only your wizard's staff for protection.

As you traverse, you find an assortment of items, be they locked away in chests, lying on the floor or hidden on the bodies of your enemies, only reclaimable when they lie dead. Even though some items may seem a little pointless, such as the bottle of water, every item in the game has a use. The key to progressing is working out what to use and where.

The lack of an intro screen was a little discouraging, but as soon as I begun the game, I realised why they didn't want to waste any disk space on something as minor as an attract screen. It seems as if every spare byte has gone into the graphics in the game. If ever a game could be said to have truly realistic animation, this is the one. Every movement made with in the game by anything has been finely calculated to look as perfect as possible, right down to the swing of the wizard's robes and the glitter of the jewels.

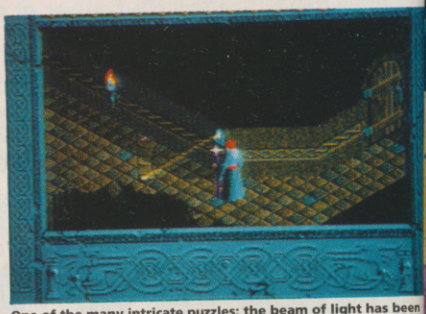
In terms of the design of the game, Will Harvey and his band of merry men must have sweated blood. Every room poses a new problem, from following a secret path through a room laced with traps, to enticing some Will-O-The-Wisp to follow you into combat. All in all, you've got a game that will lead you well into the early hours of next week.

● Tony Dill



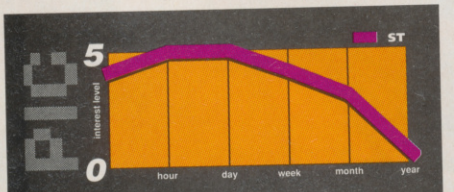
A warrior lies slain: and so will you if you don't watch your back!

The inventory screen. Selecting an item will either use it or drop it



One of the many intricate puzzles: the beam of light has been directed to the gem...but how?

One of the more endearing characters. Here, you have to try to persuade him to give you his gem



The glorious screenshots on the back of the packaging easily cover for the lack of an intro screen, and your anticipation is well rewarded upon loading. The game starts tough and gets tougher, but is never frustrating. You learn a bit more each time you play, so you don't mind constantly restarting. The only problem is that as soon as you've finished the game, there is no incentive to play again.

ACE RATING **910**

10 8 8 5 G IQ A FF

ATARI ST

If I said the graphics were anything other than marvellous, I'd obviously need my head examining. Realistic and smooth, they only suffer in being a little too slow. The sound is a little lax in places, but is more than made up for by an already highly atmospheric game. A lasting product, and if it doesn't appeal to you, then you're probably brain dead.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	OUTNOW
AMIGA	£24.99	IMMINENT

No other versions planned

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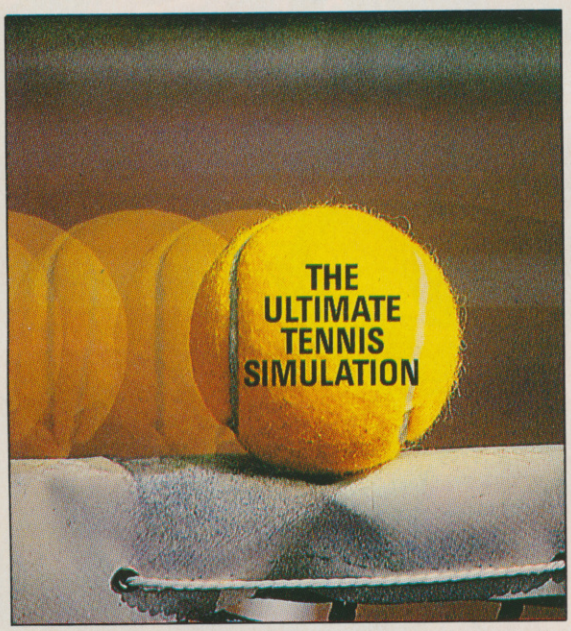

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What have biplanes, German U-Boats and American B-52 Bombers have in-common?

THREE-SIXTY

BLUE MAX

Three-Sixty Pacific, Inc is the American software developer responsible for the ACE-Rated *Harpoon* naval strategy game. Now this Californian-based company is working on simulations of WWI planes, WWII submarines and WWIII bombers. Now that's a lot of WWs!

ACES OF THE GREAT WAR

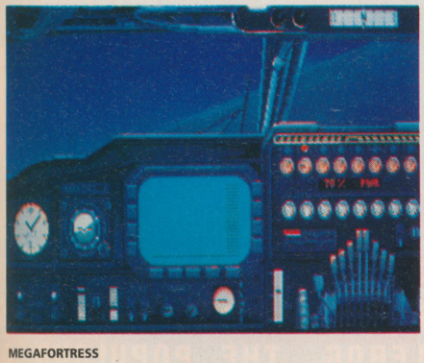
"How good are your nerves at 2000ft with an armed Fokker DR.I on your tail? Forget glory... think survival," says '360'. *Blue Max, Aces of the Great War*, attempts to recreate the excitement and challenge of air-to-air combat over France during 1917.

You have the choice of flying one of eight classic bi- and tri-plane fighters from 'The War To End All Wars'. This realistic solid-3D flight-simulation is packed with features, including user-defined

BLUE MAX

weather conditions, two-player head-to-head play options, instant replay, and multiple historically-accurate missions.

Blue Max is to be released this month on PC for £34.99dk – this version fully supports 256-colour VGA graphics and AdLib, Covox and Game Blaster soundboards. The game even features the soundtrack from the original George Peppard movie. Versions for the Amiga and ST will follow later this year.



MEGAFORTRESS

DAS BOOT

This German U-Boat simulation is based around the accounts of Peter Cremer, one of the three surviving U-Boat captains from World War Two, and technical source from the sensitive and absorbing TV mini-series.

"Sound, music and historical perspective combine to make this an intense and action packed simulation," explains Three-Sixty. *Das Boot* incorporates missions in the Arctic, Norway, Gibraltar, Bay of Biscay and the North Atlantic as you attack sea-, land- and air-based targets and avoid mine fields and depth charges.

BLUE MAX

Like the other games mentioned here, *Das Boot* is out now on PC (£34.99dk) with Amiga and ST versions available soon. "Scenes of confrontation between the sub and its enemies on the surface and in the air are vividly displayed in 256-colour VGA graphics and a full 3D world with multiple camera angles," states Three-Sixty.

Das Boot is basically an underwater version of Accolade's *Ace of Aces* flight-sim... which is hardly surprising as Tom Frisina, the boss of Three-Sixty, also happens to be the ex-President of Accolade.

FLIGHT OF THE OLD DOG

Based around the best-selling (but typically gung-ho) American novel, *Flight of the Old Dog* by Dale Brown, *MegaFortress* features a vintage American B-52 Bomber modified and armed with state-of-the-art weapons and avionics, a satin black finish for stealth avoidance, and go-faster stripes. This 'turbo-nutter' B-52 flies just 200ft off the ground at a hectic 600MPH, and is apparently capable of attacking any target in the world regardless of its location and amount of defences.

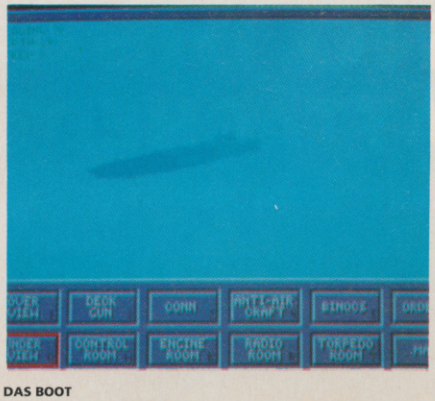
MegaFortress is a sophisticated flight-simulation available for PC (£34.99dk), and coming soon on ST and Amiga. During the game you take-on the roles and views of the pilot, navigator, weapons officer, communications officer and electronic countermeasures officer. You have to attack a heavily-defended target on the Kamchatka Peninsula while warding off Soviet MiG-29 and SU27 fighters.

"You must employ planning, strategy and the ability to handle tremendous pressure under fire," reveals Three-Sixty.

Author Dale Brown actually collaborated with Three-Sixty's developers to produce the game. Brown was originally a U.S. Air Force Captain and participated in numerous top-secret tests and exercises for Strategic Air Command, including the Red Flag tactical combat exercise at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada where he took his FB-111 bomber over the speed of sound at tree-top level to escape 'enemy' fighters and ground-to-air threats.

● Rik Haynes

DAS BOOT



DAS BOOT

CU AMIGA

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NOVEMBER 1990 £2.95
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FULL DETAILS ON PAGE 20

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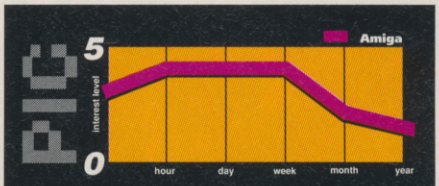
BLITZKRIEG MAY 1940

IMPRESSIONS put history in your hands

The display fully zoomed out. You can zoom in for more detail on any section



The game doesn't initially impress with its graphics but once you see your armies march into Belgium steamrollering the French, your interest builds and they become secondary to the game. Unfortunately there just isn't enough here to hold your interest and after winning both ways there's not a lot left, even with the three variable skill levels.

ACE RATING **805**

AMIGA

Graphics are rather functional and a bit garish. The icons are clear and the game is quite user-friendly. There isn't any sound but this isn't really missed in a game of this sort. Nothing here that pushes the Amiga to its limits, although your army commanders do make quite intelligent decisions. This version reviewed should be exactly the same as the one available in the shops about now.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

On May 10th 1940 the German army launched its attack against the Low Countries and France. The plan was to trick the Allies into defending Belgium while the main weight of the German Army stormed through the Ardennes, crossed the Meuse and then struck out for the Channel. This would split the the Allied army and cut its northern forces off.

The plan was largely successful and within a week the Allies had to retreat. The British Expeditionary Force decided to withdraw from Dunkirk on the 25th May and, by June 14th, Paris was in Hitler's hands.

The main reason for this success was due to the speed at which the German forces moved and the name 'Blitzkrieg' ('lightning war') was given to this form of mechanised warfare. In 1990, however, you get a second chance as Impressions put history in your hands and offer you the opportunity to send Adolf packing (in the *May 1940* section) or to repeat his success (in the *Blitzkrieg* section).

Almost all of the game is played via a large four-way scrolling map showing France and the Low Countries. Also displayed are the major rivers and roads. Your armies take the form of square icons representing the units available to you. Different colours distinguish each of your armies which include Armour (tanks and other armoured vehicles), Artillery and Infantry, and finally Motorised Infantry (Vehicle transportation).

Each army has a percentage rating which determines its ability in combat. These ratings are altered depending on the unit type and terrain in which the battle is fought. Should a unit's rating fall below 45% it will be disbanded and combined with other units in the same army.

Terrain also effects movement, with each type costing a set amount of points. Armour, for example, has twelve points at its disposal, while Infantry on the other hand has only six.

Troop movements shown in close-up. No *UMS* style topographical displays here...

The game can be played entirely by the mouse or keyboard depending on your preference and can be set at one of three levels. A number of facilities are available each turn. Issuing orders are the most important, here you can find out the status of all units in the army, current objectives and also current orders.

Also present are the Strategic Movement and Reserve options where you can resupply units and raise morale, along with sending support to armies with less than six units.

The units themselves can be varied in a number of different ways. For example, each army has three order settings, these being Attack, Defend and Discretion. Although not actually direct orders, these strongly influence the commander's decisions. Every so often a commander will make some comments, giving you some advice or informing you of his supply requirements, expecting you to organise reinforcements. Supplies depend on routes being available, with the type determining the amount getting through.

Combat is achieved by being adjacent to the opposing unit and damage is shown with a number depicting its new rating. Along with the factors mentioned above, Morale also plays a key part, raising effectiveness by up to 30%.

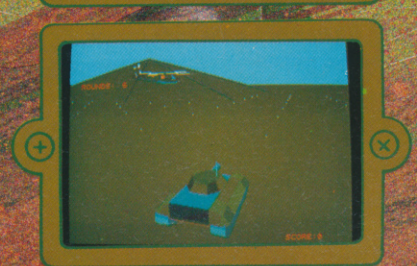
Graphics are functional and serve their purpose well, being both clear and logical, although they could have been made a bit more presentable with a better use of colour.

Blitzkrieg May 1940 is a good effort on the part of Impressions and, unlike some modern wargames, is very easy to get into. That makes it suitable for novice wargamers who fancy a spot of strategy without having any desire to don tin helmets and dig trenches in the front garden. For a dedicated soldier, however, the scenario and its implementation are too limited and, even though there are different skill levels, there just isn't enough variety to detain you at the Front.

● **Khalid Howladar**

ENTER BATTLE COMMAND FIRST INTO BATTLE... LAST TO LEAVE

Battle



ATARI ST
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Set in the near future, as an alternative reality, BATTLE COMMAND is an arcade/strategy game in which the player controls a single "MAULER" Assault Tank in one of 16 scenarios (missions) in the ultra war, fought between two dominant races in the NEW WORLD. The latest phase of the North/South war has been going on for over 10 years, with a stalemate eventually developing - a standoff between armies massed over a long dug-in battlefront. Such are the defensive capabilities of each side, full scale attacks are suicidal, so any offensive moves are, by necessity, small "behind the lines" actions performed by elite troops in specially designed vehicles. The Mauler is the latest such machine - capable of being lifted in and out of hostile territory by fast stealth choppers and armed with the most advanced weaponry the Northern scientists can devise.

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VOODOO NIGHTMARE

Your girlfriend's left you and run off with your best friend. A witch doctor has put a hex on you. And you're stuck in the middle of the jungle. Thank PALACE.

Deep in the jungle, hunting for a temple Watch out for the holes in the bridge

Voodoo Nightmare is Zippo Games' final foray into the home computer market, sadly. From now on the authors behind such classics as *Cosmic Pirate* will be console only. So I loaded their farewell product with only one thought – will they go out with a bang or a squirt?

A huge 3D-isometric maze, cleverly disguised as a jungle, sets the scene as you search for five temples and the help of the five different gods who inhabit them in your struggle against a hex-dealing witch doctor. The jungle is over 500 screens large and also includes shops (for buying extra weapons such as knives and torches) and casinos, where you can increase your money (or fruit, as it is more commonly known).

Each temple follows the same lines: a small (only 50 screens!) maze of rooms filled with diamonds. The idea is to collect all the diamonds in the temple and bring them to the temple god. If you have collected all the gems, the god will present you with a pin with which to impale your voodoo doctor doll and a special power which you'll need later on in the game. To leave the temple, you need all the gems and some are in hidden rooms that can only be opened by killing certain creatures or by moving certain objects around, bringing a slight puzzle element into the game.

Once you have completed all five temples, you have to complete three special missions in the jungle itself, such as rescuing a lion cub, for the last of the eight pins. You then face the witch doctor himself in his massive underground hideaway – even larger than the jungle!

ISOTONIC CONTROLS?

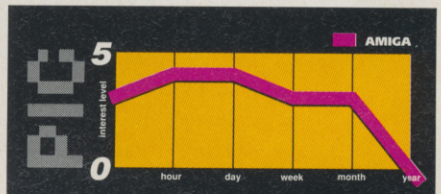
The controls are definitely the game's weakest point. As with any isometric game, all the joystick directions have been rotated by 45 degrees with the fire button performing a standard attack procedure (If you have a weapon, you'll use it – otherwise you'll jump). For example, pulling down on the joystick makes your on-screen persona walk in a down-right diagonal. The problem is that, responsive though the controls are, the character moves far too quickly to be finely controlled, meaning that in times where precise control is necessary (e.g. trying to kill a spider by jumping on it) you end up racing around in uncontrollable circles. With practise you can get used to them, but mastering them is another matter.

Voodoo Nightmare is a well designed product, with an interesting storyline. I'm not too sure how to take the size of the game, though. On one hand, it is a huge challenge, and one I'm sure would be rewarding to beat. However on the other , it does look like it could become dull halfway through. Maybe a little more variety next time? Oh, sorry I forgot. There won't be a next time.

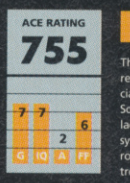
● Tony Dillon

MANUAL DEXTERITY

In a desperate bid to beat Origin at their own game of designing unusual manuals, Palace have rehashed the style of the old Rupert The Bear books to tell the story of the game. Artwork and text from Lorne Campbell and Simon Birrell adorn a book based around a primitive comic system, with two frames on each page and a short poem under each. Sounds ripe for bed time reading. Here's a little taster:
"Boots Barker, his wife and best friend,
Over the Congo one weekend
Thrown to his death, can Boots be saved?
I fear Boots' wife has misbehaved!"



As you begin the game standing in the middle of nowhere, you start more than a little aimlessly. However, the thrill of exploration soon takes hold, and thanks to the size of the game keeps hold. Interest peaks as you near the end of the game – provided you keep playing that is – and finally disappears after you either give up or complete it, whichever comes first.



AMIGA

The graphics are bright and attractive, though don't really make use of the Amiga's subtle palette, especially when compared to *Cadaver* or *The Immortal*. Sound is strictly limited to a few spot effects. The lack of scrolling is replaced by an awful flip screen system that seems to display as small a section of the room as possible. That, coupled with the dodgy controls, tends to spoil the enjoyment of the game.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99	IMMINENT

No other versions planned

A typical room in the spider temple. The circles on the floor are teleporters that take you to other parts of the room.

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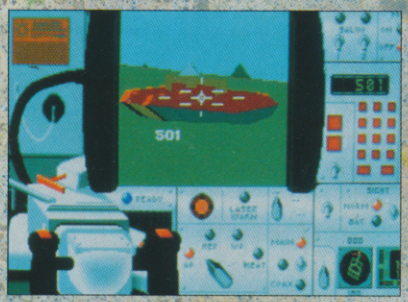

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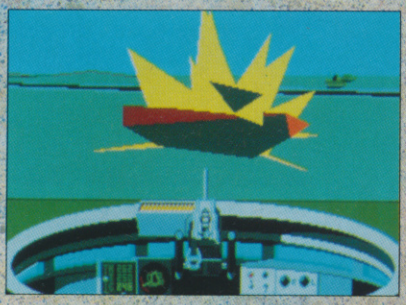

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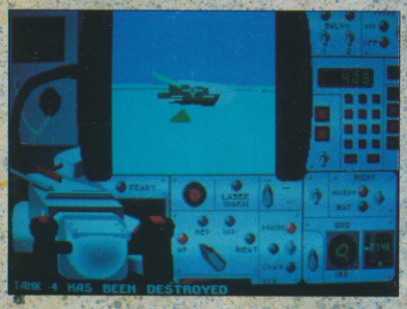
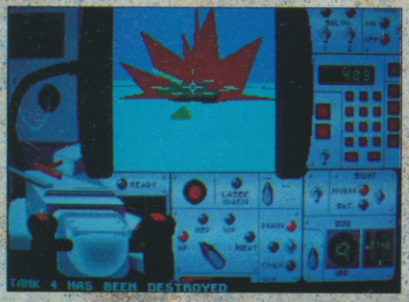
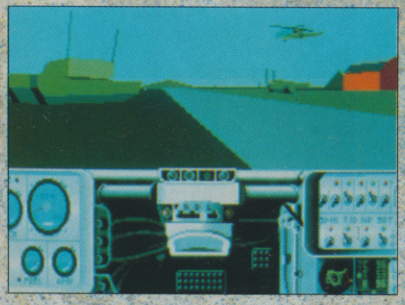


IBM SCREEN SHOTS SHOWN. ACTUAL SHOTS MAY VARY





M1 Tank Platoon was released for IBM PC compatible machines in October 1989;

"MicroProse has surely excelled on this one: it's all there, from superb playability through great attention to detail to one of the best manuals I've seen in a long time. The competition should watch out, as this one's going to take some beating." *** PC Leisure Spring '90**

" I can't really fault M1 Tank Platoon as it's definitely MicroProse's most comprehensive simulation yet." 87% C&VG Nov '89

"The most frighteningly accurate tank sim we've seen." 926 Ace Dec '89

WING COMMANDER

Wing Commander contains a wide variety of viewpoints from both inside and outside your fighter including: Chase Plane view which puts the camera directly behind your ship (you can choose how close to be), Battle view displays a long-distance view of an entire battle, Tactical view always keeps you and the ship you've targeted (or the most significant threat) in view, Missile view gives you a missile's eye view of the action, and Tailing views which positions the camera behind any ship in the area.

TRADE SECRETS

Wing Commander took 77 person months to be developed. Chris Roberts plus four other programmers provided the revolutionary graphics code found in the game, while four graphic artists designed the ray-traced and bitmapped screens and sprites. Audio was supplied by two composers and one sound-effects specialist, and three writers developed the gameplay scenario. The absolute minimum time to complete the game – if you don't screw up – is eight hours solid playing. *Wing Commander* can be played as a straight-forward shoot'em-up or advanced space flight-simulation. It's a sort of cross between Sega's *Galaxy Force II* coin-op and a classic 8-bit Atari game called *Star Raiders*. "You can develop your own style and tactics in *Wing Commander*," says Chris Roberts – the ex-Brit creator of the world's first cinematic space combat simulator. But he confides: "I prefer to fly by the seat of my pants". Afterburners are the key to successfully flying the four spacecraft found in *Wing Commander*. You must master this function to get good firing positions against enemy ships. In fact, they're the the only way to survive later on in the game.

Roberts moved to Austin, Texas in the States after programming the BBC computer versions of Ocean's *Match Day* and *Stryker's Run* for Superior Software. Shortly after arriving in this busy Texan town, Roberts started to work for Origin – the leading American software company responsible for the hugely popular Ultima series of role-playing games – who just happened to be based just around the corner. Roberts has written *Times of Lore*, *Bad Blood* and now *Wing Commander* for Origin.

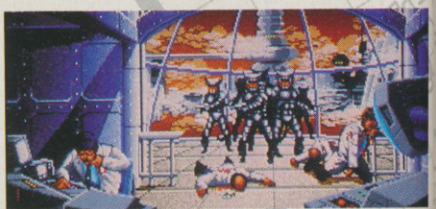
"I wanted to create a game with the movie-like effects seen in *Battlestar Galactica* and *Star Wars*," states Roberts. "I thought it would be neat to play around with military hardware while also developing the characters personalities in the game."

Roberts is currently putting the finishing touches to an add-on disk for *Wing Commander* featuring 12 missions and a plot to find a new Kilrathi Dreadnought after it butchers one of your outer colonies. In the longer term, he will soon start work on ***Wing Commander II*** which will include such extra goodies as user-defined weapon selection, more complex personalities, camera replay function, greater variety of spacecraft to fly including bombers and different bases. "I want to make it even more like a movie," confirms Roberts. *Wing Commander II* should be released by the summer of 1991.

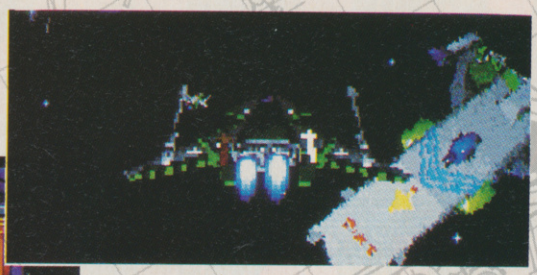
● Rik Haynes

Thrust out and kick in full afterburners with this ORIGIN/MINDSCAPE epic...

In the barracks. The sleeping pilots in the bunks represent saved games, you can also quit by going through the airlock at the rear. Note the attention to detail: the bucket next to the bottom right bunk is soaking up water leaking from the pipe above, a broken fluorescent light sporadically blinks, pictures of near-naked girls hang on the lockers.



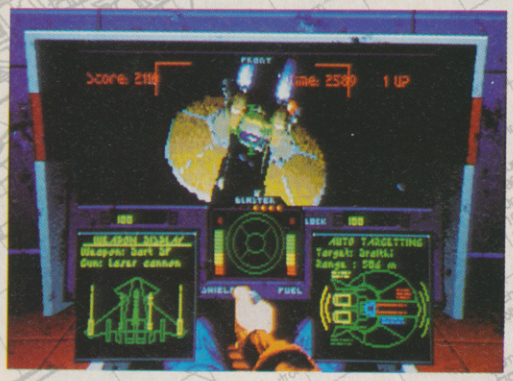
This 'Meanwhile' sequence is another example of *Wing Commanders* film-like presentation. Animated mini-movies show the progress of the war throughout the galaxy. Here Kilrathi soldiers attack the Terran Research Colony on McRuliffe VI and mercilessly kill all your scientists.



Back to the safety of homebase... the TCS Tiger's Claw. You must accomplished one of the following before you can land: traveled to any Nav point, achieved any mission objective or killed at least one enemy ship.

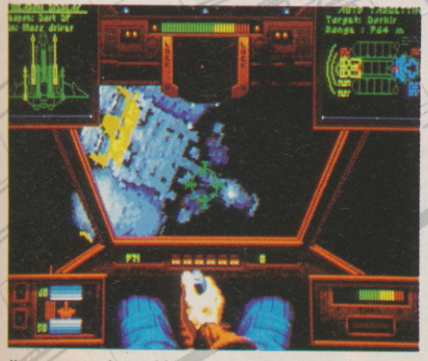
The bar is the favourite gathering spot for the crew of the Tiger's Claw. You can even talk to people – you always find the bartender and , usually, one or two pilots in the bar. Talk with everyone you can – you never know who will have clues and information helpful to you.

Landing takes you back to the hangar, where you can see what damage your ship has sustained. From the hangar, you go to a debriefing where your performance during the mission is evaluated, and every significant mission or achievement is noted by Colonel Halcyon.



Playing the TrainSim in the Tiger's Claw bar. Select this video game/training simulator and you're presented with the current hiscores and a selection of Kilrathi enemy spacecraft to fight. The TrainSim unit is a safe, painless opportunity to learn the basics of flying and combat. Certain game functions such as navigation and communications are disabled in the TrainSim.

Another dramatic sequence of multi-coloured explosions and floating debris...



You can communicate with any spacecraft in your vicinity – including the enemy. The Communications system intelligently determines who is eligible to receive a message from you and what messages you can send. Wingpeople sometimes disobey but you can give them orders like Break and Attack, Keep Formation and Return to Base. If you activate Communications when you have an enemy ship targeted and a menu of taunts appear. Taunts sometimes attack enemy ships to you, drawing fire away from a ship you're protecting, or perhaps, saving a wingperson whose ship has been damaged.

EJECT WARNING

CURRENT SPEED (KPS)

LEFT VDU *displays a profile of your fighter, showing your ship's status. You can cycle through screens displaying damage your ship has taken. You can also change your ship's active gun and weapon delivery system .*

FUEL INDICATOR

RADAR DISPLAY

BLASTER INDICATOR *shows the power level of your ship's active gun. Frequent use of the gun runs down your blaster power. Your guns will not fire if you have no blaster power. Guns recover power gradually, and recovery is slowed if your shields are also regenerating.*

RADAR DISPLAY *(Flashes in appropriate quadrant when ship is hit)*

VIEWSCREEN

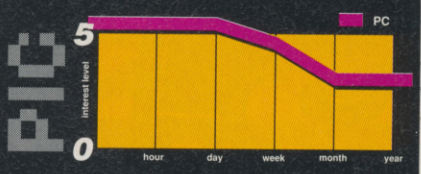
EJECT WARNING *flashes if your ship has sustained significant damage. When the eject warning starts flashing, you must decide how serious the situation is and whether to eject or not.*

RIGHT VDU *is a multi-function display allowing you to display Targeting (which indicates the status of the ship you're currently targeting), Range data and Communications (shows both your communications options and incoming video from other ships).*

ARMOUR & SHIELD INDICATOR

One of the four spacecraft you fly in *Wing Commander*. This Raptor heavy fighter is armed with 2 Neutron Guns, 2 Gatling Mass Driver Cannon, 2 Heat-Seeking Missiles, 2 Spiculum IR (Image Recognition) Missiles, a Pilum FF (Friend or Foe) Missile and Porcupine Space Mine.

PIC



What does it feel like to play a movie? The moment you load-up *Wing Commander*, you know you're playing something special. State of the art graphics, sound and presentation are supported by playable and additive gameplay. This cinematic combat-sim won't keep you hooked for months, but this doesn't detract from the fact that *Wing Commander* is a game in a class all it's own. Origin could become *the* software house of the decade.

ACE RATING **949**

10		10	10
G	4 IQ	A	FF

IBM PC

This is the first time graphics and sound of this quality have been found outside the arcades. Want to play *Wing Commander* in the best possible way? You need:: 12MHz 286 PC (at least), VGA graphics card, Roland MT-32 sound-board, 540K expanded memory (full music, disk caching and RAM/EMS graphics – see your pilot's hand move, cockpit sparks, hyperspace warp flash, large explosions), hard disc and joystick.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£34.99dk	OUT NOW
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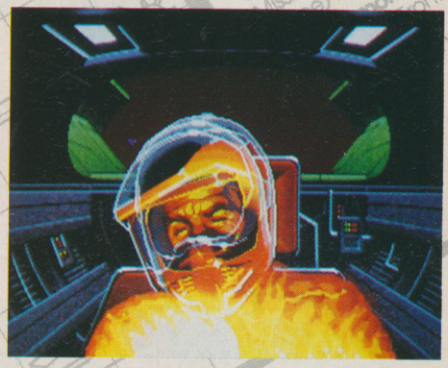
CDTV	£TBAdk	TBA
SUPER FAMICOM	£TBAct	TBA

No other versions planned



Game over! Each campaign in *Wing Commander* has its own plot and conclusion. Each series of missions you fly – and whether or not you're victorious – affects the Confederation's chances for ultimate victory in Vega Sector. After several missions, you're presented with Campaign Progress Screens, story updates which describe what's happening in the war. Do badly, and the forces of the Terran Confederation take a beating. Do well, and Terran forces prevail. Do very well, and you may be responsible for Confederation victory in the Vega Sector.

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Complete the various challenge screens and race through the S.T.U.N. Network towards the 'Ultimate Challenge'.

FEEL THE POWER!

Available on: IBM PC 3.5" & 5.25" Atari ST, Amiga, Commodore 64 (casssette, disk) Amstrad (cassette, disk) Spectrum +3, Spectrum 48/128
Programmmed by: The Kremlin
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Published by Domark Software Ltd, Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR Tel: +44 (0)81-780 2224

IBM PC (EGA) Screenshots

DOMARK

GREMLINS 2

The start of level 2. That green blob is a gremlin on a skateboard

ELITE fed them after midnight!

Gremlins 2, the movie, received a mixed bag of reviews. Some loved it and some hated it, so Elite took a bit of a risk in signing a license that could never be described as a 'sure-fire hit'. Sad to say, it seems to have been a gamble that hasn't paid off.

The game is based around five scenes from the film, with each level following along basically the same lines. You travel from left to right along the flip-screen level shooting the gremlins that appear randomly throughout with your trusty torch, or any other weapons that lie about waiting to be collected (including frisbees and telephone receivers!?!). At the end of each level there is a lift, which will only open if you have collected a special item (marked with a yellow G) hidden somewhere on the level.

Visually, the game looks like nothing more than a standard ST game – garish colours and poorly masked sprites. Each screen is composed of myriads of platforms disguised (badly) as items of furniture. Bonus items, such as weapons, extra lives and extra time (yes, it's a race against the clock) are dotted at various heights, and it takes planning to get into positions where you can reach them, as well as incredible reflexes to avoid the randomly appearing gremlins.

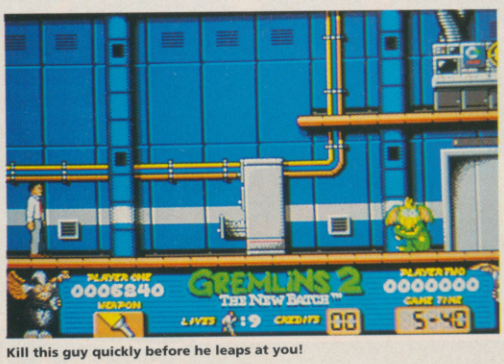
Here lies the problem. Put very simply, gremlins appear randomly on screen and move quickly. You hot on the trot too, but the joystick response is appalling. Gremlins can appear from either side of the screen at any time – even as you are about to walk off – and (surprise) contact kills – with unjustifiable regularity.

Even more annoying is an interesting little glitch based around a character called Shocker, who pokes out of electricity sockets and fires bolts of energy at you. He has a tendency to hang around the edges of the screen – no problem, but when you die, you are placed at the edge of the screen you died on. Therefore, dear reader, if Shocker zaps you at the edge of the screen, the game is almost certainly over. Since this little number crops up on Level 4, a certain amount of hair pulling is likely to ensue.

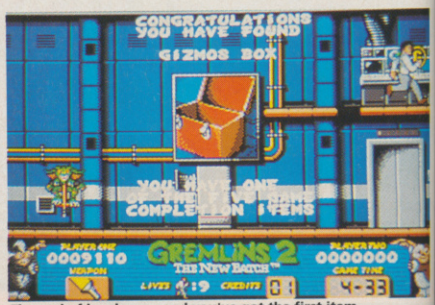
Without these playability problems, *Gremlins 2* could have been a really good game. Unfortunately, it's...well...pretty evil.

● Tony Dillon

One of the tougher, but very stupid, Gremlins



Kill this guy quickly before he leaps at you!



The end of level one – and you've got the first item

THE ULTIMATE

Ride

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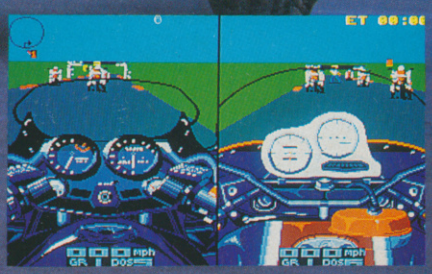
The Ultimate Ride combines ultra fast road racing graphics with unequalled presentation and animation- This is a real interactive racing movie.

Can you take the power?

MINDSCAPE

Actual screen shots



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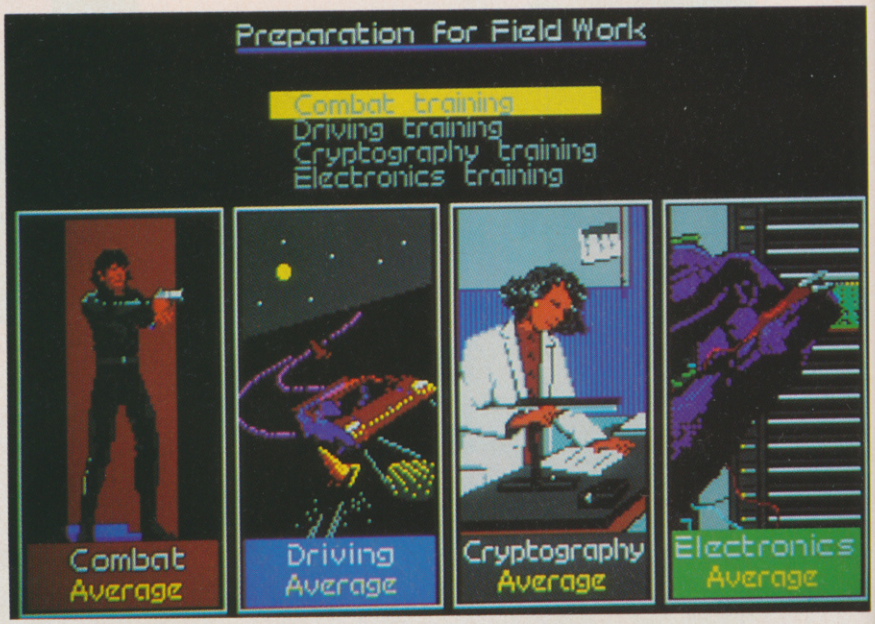
COVERT ACTION

Microprose involved in undercover espionage shock!

Well known for titles of truly monolithic proportions, Microprose has come forth with another in the range of these epic games, the strategy orientated *Covert Action*, in which you play the ultimate secret agent known as Max Remington. Dissatisfied by the confines of CIA training, Remington decided to go it alone in the World of undercover investigation - at which he excelled. Now, having worked for nearly every western Government, Remington is rumoured to take on only those cases he finds personally intriguing – the one exception to which is said to be those asked of him personally by the U.S. President.



The vital skills in which you must be trained.

Upon loading, the game runs through a short intro sequence after which you are presented with three options enabling you to either create or load a new or saved character, or to practice a skill. It's vital to familiarise yourself with the important areas of gameplay. These areas comprise of combat, driving, cryptography and electronics.

Combat is generally coupled with break-ins, whereby you must first select a point of entry. It relies initially on arming yourself adequately, depending upon the tension of the situation you are entering. Equipment includes a hand/machine gun, body armour, grenades, a motion detector and camera. Once inside the building, you will be shown a large plan display of the room and its contents through which you are free to rummage. It is advisable that the camera is taken, in addition to available bugging devices, should the room prove fruitful. A smaller display to the right includes the area immediately outside where any additional activity (like approaching guards) is shown, and a figure showing depleting resources. Combat itself is only engaged if your unscrupulous activities are discovered by others – whereupon a swift hail of bullets drops them like flies. In addition to physical combat, Remington may set booby-traps, achieved by placing a grenade in a strategic position whereby enemy movement will detonate it.

The second of the major skills, (driving) involves pursuit of a suspect through the city streets – having first chosen from four possible

Hail to the chief – the Pres briefs our agent.

FROM MICHIGAN TO MICROPROSE

Sid Meier, mainman behind *Covert Action* is rather more than 'just' a programmer. ACE now presents a compact biography on the man... As a child, Sid held a fascination with history, science and game design. In 1976 he graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in computer science. Following his graduation, Meier began programming mini-computers for General Instruments Corporation, Business Systems Division. In 1980, Meier purchased an Atari 800 as he felt its graphic capabilities were well-suited to the games he so enjoyed. Later that year, he set up an Atari user group. Having played an aerial combat game in an arcade, Sid felt he could add more realism with software specifically designed for home computers. Sid entitled his creation *HELLCAT ACE* and from this, Microprose Software emerged. Sid's ideas that software should continually challenge the player, whether beginner or expert, were at the forefront then as they are now, acknowledged by such Microprose releases as *F-19 Stealth Fighter, Railroad Tycoon, Silent Service (I and II)* and *M1 Tank Platoon*. Keep it up Sid...!

Outside the FLN hideout and ready to 'bug' the phones.

Can you really believe that a Countach is as inconspicuous as a Datsun?

pursuit cars with varying speeds, handling and levels of conspicuously. Pursuit is depicted via large map to the left, displaying all the locations you've visited. To the right are two smaller, scrolling windows, the lower showing a more detailed map and the upper, a 3-D representation of the cars. Having reached your destination a menu of options is displayed, (depending on your state of play – practise or otherwise). During this section you also have the ability to arrest subjects, but be wary that they don't become too aware of your presence beforehand – or you may become the hunted.

Cryptography involves simply deciphering a message sent by an opposing organisation. This is achieved by entering the letter you wish to decipher, followed by your chosen alternative. Once completed, the translated message will invariably reveal clues necessary to the completion of your mission.

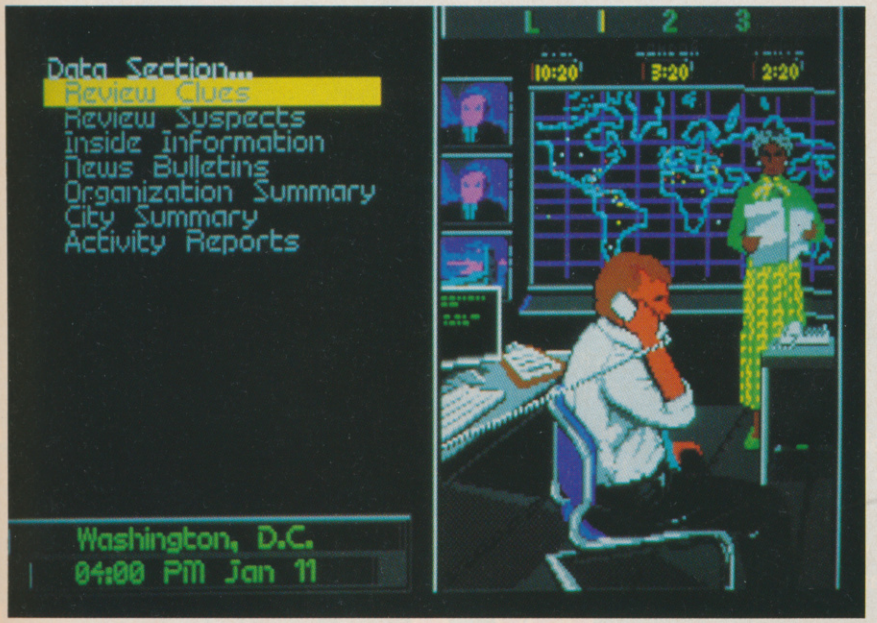
Finally, the electronics section involves studying a partially connected circuit linked to either a wiretap or a car tracer and several alarms. The objective is obvious – connect the active current to either a tap or a tracer without setting off an alarm. A time limit is imposed, after which an approaching guard will deter your attempts. Tapping phones is a necessity as regards gathering information, whereas car tracing proves useful when following a suspect.

Besides each of the four major sections, *Covert Action* includes dozens of additional scenes, locations, possible actions and inter-linking requirements, giving the player enormous tactical scope. These include observation, (a menu from which any of the major skills may be reached) where you may watch a suspected building or suspect, and Intelligence, giving you the ability to scan local and international reports, accuse double-agents or access a crime chronology making collating evidence easy, as it is all stored by your assistant with whom you may liaise.

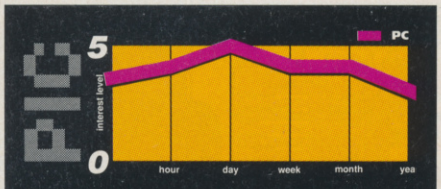
Each of the organisations encountered will have agents and branches throughout the World making travel vital, whether inter-state or inter-continental. Once having reached a destination, play continues as normal.

Complexity of gameplay has become synonymous with the Microprose name, something that *Covert Action* has bountiful supplies of. The choice of options provide a depth of play rarely seen. A choice of four skill levels, three mission areas (Middle East, Europe of the Americas), three basic crime-orientations (espionage, international crime or terrorism) and over a dozen of enemy operatives (at least half a dozen of which will be involved with each crime), *Covert Action* is a game that will take many hours of play to successfully complete.

● Alex Ruranski

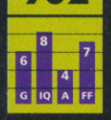


I wonder if he's calling the ACE interactive newsline on 0898 555563!



Initial impressions may vary slightly depending upon your machine, but once realising the complexity and depth, not to mention the potential for hours of play, *Covert Action* should have you playing for some considerable time – even after that all important year. A game that is worth the asking price.

ACE RATING
902



PC

Even running at its lowest capacity the game is pleasing to both eyes and ears. The various interlude and actual game screens keep interest high. Sound on the review version was somewhat grating, but the option for silence is given. *Covert Action* is one of the best espionage titles on the PC.

RELEASE DETAILS

PC	£39.99dk	December

No other versions planned

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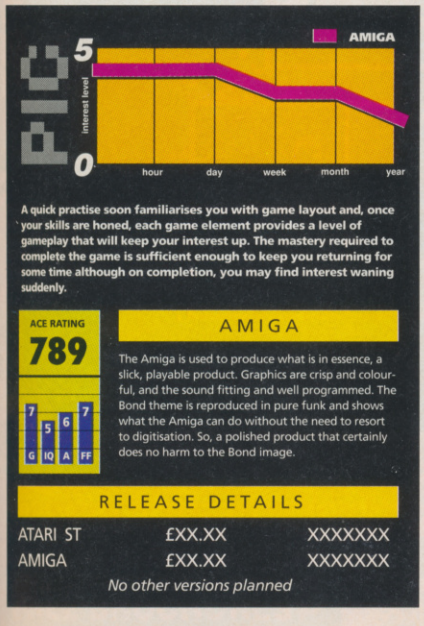
Following the original plot, Bond and Soviet agent Anya Amasova must confront nuclear sub kidnapper Karl Stromberg in his underwater fortress Atlantis. Each scene is introduced by a seriously funky rendition of the Bond theme and a briefing. For starters, you control the famous white Lotus Esprit; up against the clock, your objective is to reach the boat that is to take you to meet Stromberg.



Under fire and heading for the cover of the Q-Truck...

Q's revolutionary car may carry up to three offensive and three defensive weapons, ranging from a basic machine gun, to ground/air missiles as well as smoke and paint guns for evasive purposes. Decked out with a full complement of hardware, the car is able to unleash some impressive firepower.

Armaments do not come free and, once purchased, diminish with use, but the road ahead is littered with bonuses that may be used to replenish or buy extras. Having reached the waiting boat, play transfers to the water in a similar fashion. Throughout this phase, other vehicles (pedestrians, armoured cars, bikes and the like) hinder your progress on land. On water, you must avoid swimmers, piers and more of Stromberg's agents.

The first part of Scene Two involves more of the same. After getting essential extra hardware that must include underwater capability, you proceed to the second half of the scene – the underwater section, reminiscent of the recent Xenon 2 and equally as difficult! Enemies come in the form of mines, scuba divers and sub-aqua vehicles, the latter of which are particularly lethal.

Scene 3 pits you directly against Stromberg's agents in the first of two Op Wolf style sections as, having infiltrated Atlantis, both Anya and Bond are captured. 007 escapes and, having released the crews from the captured subs, mounts a moving security camera in an endeavour to blow a hole in the control room wall. Using a crosshair, you must protect Bond with diminishing ammo (and morale) from attack by dozens of agents.

CODED INTERLUDE

Next there's a code cracking section, where you must decipher a series of shapes in a limited time, allowing Bond to redirect the nuclear missiles towards the sites from which they are to be launched – fail, and the nukes take out Moscow and New York.

The penultimate scene has James setting off to save Anya aboard his Q-modified wet bike. Penetrating the defences, Bond reaches the final section and the second of the Op Wolf scenarios. Initially up against more of Stromberg's forces, including the formidable Jaws, Bond must then successfully disable Stromberg whilst carefully avoiding shooting Anya. Succeed here and taste sweet victory!

Graphic detail and good choice of colour make the game a joy to look at and the underwater section is, aesthetically, particularly pleasing. The shooting scenes are well implemented, though the sounds are fairly standard – engines and guns abound. I did, however, particularly like the agonised scream of the pedestrians as you 'accidentally' run them down in the driving sequences.

There are however, two questionable aspects. The code-breaking appears to be something of a filler to break up surrounding scenes and the initial difficulty level is quite high. If you're not a strong player, you might yearn for an easier introduction.

This is, however, Domark's best Bond game to date. It may seem blatantly plagiaristic, but the sources all work very well together. Each section has been introduced at a particular point during the overall structure, giving the player as much variety as possible whilst never becoming disjointed.

● Alex Ruranski

Take to your wet-bike in a bid to rescue rampant-Red Anya

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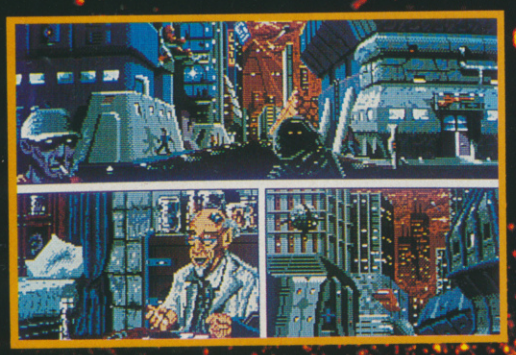
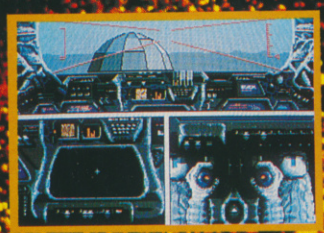


Player interaction gives you the chance not only to participate in the lives of other characters, but to be plunged into the actual city of Terrapolis.



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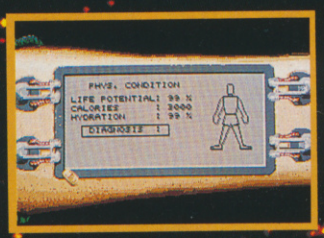

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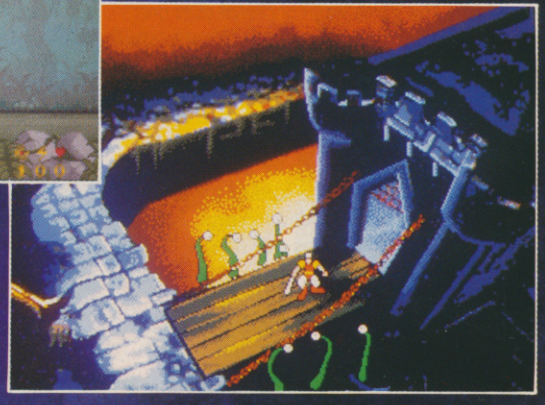
INTO THE LAIR II

Wrath of the Dragon on C64...

...and ST!

Two guys worked on the C64 version of *Wrath of the Demon*



Rik Haynes leads a bold quest to discover new games from the land of the Maple leaf...

ACE took an in-depth look behind the scenes at Sullivan-Bluth's Dublin-based movie studios back in issue 33. This leading animated-film producer also created the innovative *Dragon's Lair* videodisc arcade game back in the early eighties. Now we've interviewed the people responsible for the computer conversions of *Dragon's Lair* – one of the few Canadian games companies.

ReadySoft was formed over three years ago by David Foster, a veteran of the Commodore PET, VIC-20 and Apple II micros. Before ReadySoft, Foster was an equal partner in Digital Solutions writing productivity software for the C64. "I've always had an interest in games but frequently seemed to end up working with productivity software," sighs Foster. ReadySoft's first product was a C64 emulator for the Amiga, this was followed by the Amiga version of *Dragon's Lair* in 1988. Over the last two years, this Ontario-based company has developed several computer versions of Sullivan-Bluth's *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* videodisc games. In keeping with its roots, ReadySoft has even produced a Macintosh emulator for the Amiga.

CREATIVE FREEDOM

"I like the creative freedom of the games industry," confirms Foster. "You're only limited by your imagination, programming talent and determination."

"We have two styles of games that we are concentrating on: cartoon animation – such as *Dragon's Lair* – and high-end arcade (like the forthcoming *Wrath of the Demon*)."

Foster boldly adds, "We're unlike many companies in that we prefer quality over quantity. We're content with 2-3 high quality releases per year. Future releases will include games that combine *Dragon's Lair*-quality animation with greatly increased playability, and more *Wrath of the Demon* style games with even more graphics, variety and gameplay. Six-disk games don't scare us!"

DUNGEONS AND DEMONS

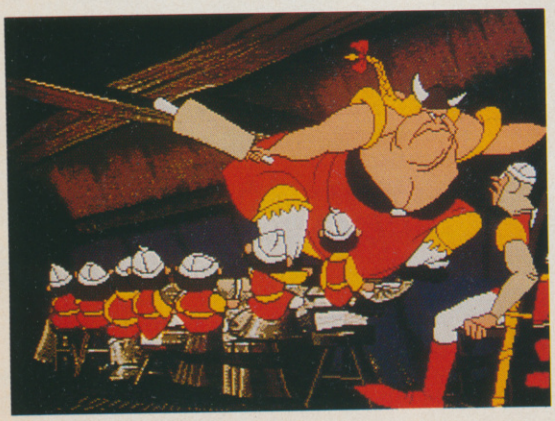
ReadySoft's next release will be *Wrath of the Demon*, an original hack-and-slash'em-up apparently featuring over 1200 frames of animation, more than 100 different monsters, 15-level parallax-scrolling and over two megabytes of graphics.

"After a briefing by the King, you set out in search of the Demon on horseback. At nightfall you encounter goblins who you must defeat. You must rescue a fairy from a dragon, travel through a cave which leads to the swamp which leads to a clearing. The clearing leads to an old tower and a temple where you must battle with monsters that inhabit them to collect items necessary to defeat the Demon. You then reach the Demon's castle which you must explore to reach your ultimate challenge – the Demon itself."

Most of the scenes in *Wrath of the Demon* include a parallax-scrolling scene (where you must defeat a number of monsters, avoid obstacles and collect items) – followed by a fight scene where you must defeat one or more large, intelligent monsters. There are over 100 animated characters, including goblins, elfs, orcs, swamp creatures, snakes, fairies, ghosts, dragons, human-scorpions, gargoyles and demons.

DEMON TECH SPECS

Save game option
Over 13 scenariios
Over 250 adversaries
Over 2Mb of graphics
20 different movements
Over 25 sprites on-screen
15-level parallax-scrolling
Over 550 screens of action
Over 30 different sound-effects
More than 100 colours on-screen
Screen updated 60 times per second
Maximum object size of 300x144 pixels
9 different soundtracks by David Whittaker



One of the attractive splash screens found in *Wrath of the Demon* (ST version shown here)

ReadySoft [left to right]: Jorge Freitas (C64 Graphics Conversion), Steve Douglas (C64 Programmer), Claude Peltier (Amiga Graphics), David Foster (President), Pierra Proulx (Amiga Programmer), Ralf Doenich (ST Programmer) and Ulrich Doenich (ST Graphics Conversion).

With *Wrath of the Demon*, ReadySoft's programming and graphics team wanted to make a game that would take advantage of all the capabilities of the Amiga with better graphics, animation and parallax-scrolling than anything previously available. The game was conceived over one year ago and has taken 10 months to complete. ReadySoft sketched the graphics on paper first, then transferred them to computer using an EASYL drawing tablet. The images were then touched-up and completed using *DeluxePaint III*. Creating the mapping system for the monsters and graphics was one of the hardest things to achieve during the game's development. Fitting it all into 512K of memory was also a major frustration.

"We like to think that we're breaking new ground with the sophistication of the graphics and animation, and the 60 frames per second 15-level parallax-scrolling," says Foster. "The best features of *Wrath of the Demon* are the smooth multi-level parallax-scrolling, detailed and smooth character animation, and the large characters and intelligent monsters in the fight scenes – diehard gamers will love the final Demon fight scene!"

Wrath of the Demon will be released on Amiga, ST and PC this month (priced at £29.99dk each). Additionally, a four-disk C64 version is on the cards – although this could turn into a C64 cartridge. Other versions under development include CPC console and Spectrum implementations due early next year.

ReadySoft is also developing the Amiga, ST, PC, Macintosh and Apple IIGS versions of *Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp*. Once upon a time... "Princess Daphne has been spirited away to a wrinkle in time by the evil wizard Mordroc who plans to force her into marriage. Only you, Dirk the Daring, can save her". The next installment of the *Dragon's Lair* saga will be available later this month for the bargain-price of £44.99dk on Amiga, PC and ST. Lead on bold adventurer, your quest awaits!

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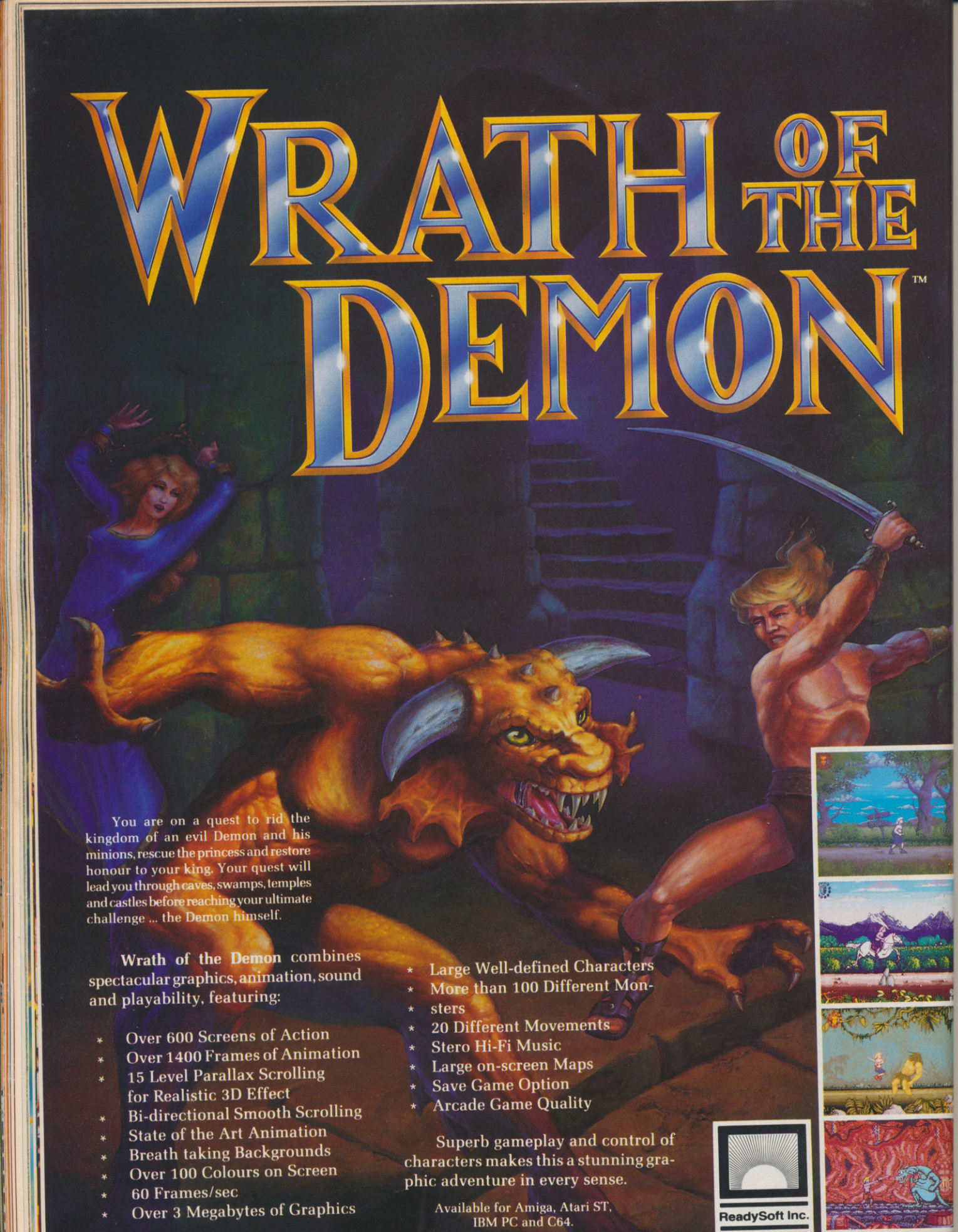
WRATH OF THE DEMON™



You are on a quest to rid the kingdom of an evil Demon and his minions, rescue the princess and restore honour to your king. Your quest will lead you through caves, swamps, temples and castles before reaching your ultimate challenge ... the Demon himself.

Wrath of the Demon combines spectacular graphics, animation, sound and playability, featuring:

* Over 600 Screens of Action
* Over 1400 Frames of Animation
* 15 Level Parallax Scrolling for Realistic 3D Effect
* Bi-directional Smooth Scrolling
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* Breath taking Backgrounds
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* More than 100 Different Monsters
* 20 Different Movements
* Stero Hi-Fi Music
* Large on-screen Maps
* Save Game Option
* Arcade Game Quality

Superb gameplay and control of characters makes this a stunning graphic adventure in every sense.

Available for Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC and C64.

ReadySoft Inc.

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SHOCKWAVE

This is the first published product from a new coding team called Light Source and has, beyond shadow of a doubt, some of the most impressive sprite-based 3D graphics yet seen on the Amiga. *Afterburner*-like, they give you a true first-person perspective view of high speed travel across four different landscapes, complete with huge items of scenery and a constantly detailed ground surface that flies underneath you at an enormous rate.

You've been placed in charge of one of the largest prison complexes ever built. So large is it, that it could quite easily be mistaken for a small city. Which is exactly what it has been mistaken for by a wandering alien attack force. Your defences are small but effective. A few meagre army units dotted about to slow the onrush of attacking aliens, plus a tiny one-man fighter plane, armed with the weakest of missiles. With this you have to survive ten vicious attack waves?

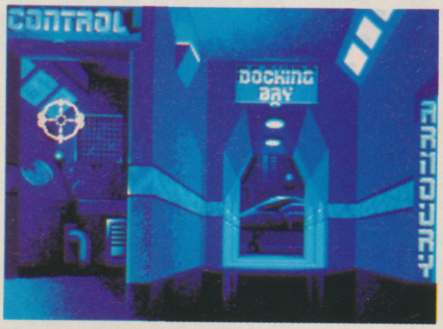
Well, not quite. These prisoners are quite a resourceful lot, and so is the land you are based upon – split into four quadrants, each is capable of providing one of your four main needs. The mountains house the platinum mines that provide you with £10000 per mine built during every game. With this money you can buy more mines to provide you with even more money. You can also build oil rigs out in the sea quadrant to provide you with fuel for your 'plane, and buy extra army units to place in the jungle for extra protection and create factories in the desert region – to develop and build new and more powerful weapons for your craft.

The only thing you can't do, it seems, is to replenish your ship's already limited shields, which is a bit of a pain when you go out to fight the invading aliens. Before you go out to fight, you choose a quadrant to fly to (see the ALL MAPPED OUT panel), bearing in mind that the more aliens marked on your map, the more you're going to have to kill. You then check the armoury screen to make sure your ship is loaded with the most up-to-date weapons you possess. Remember, your factories are constantly developing new toys for you to play with. Then it's out into the bright, blue yonder for the fight of your life.

The flight scenes take place in one of four daily time zones (morning, afternoon, evening and night) and as the day draws on, your visibility lessens. Obviously flying against invading craft is hardest at night, as to be honest they to have a tendency to blend into the background a fair bit. Flying the plane is a dream. The mouse controls an on-screen cross-hair that serves the dual purpose of both targeting your weapons systems and steering the craft. Things to aim for are the circling aliens. Things to avoid are large ground obstacles, such as buildings, trees and oil rigs, as well as steering clear of, or shooting, enemy missiles that threaten to steal one of your six shields from under your feet. As you work your way through the ten waves of ensuing aliens things get progressively harder. Hold out for long enough, and finally the Calvary will appear. Provided there's anything left for them to rescue, that is.

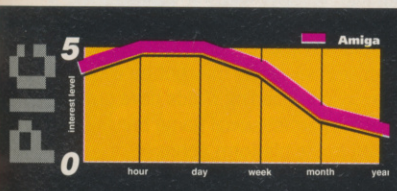
● Tony Dillon

Digital Magic Software defends its homestead



The main corridor in the prison. Here you have access to the three screens of the game. Note the nice illumination effects as you pass the cursor over the open doors.

The Map Screen (see ALL MAPPED OUT panel).



As the action is instantaneous, you can get in and play straight away. As you get into the game, you begin to learn strategies, lengthening the interest factor. And as it does play so well, there's no reason why you shouldn't continue to keep returning to the game time after time. A very well presented product that plays like a dream.

ACE RATING **875**

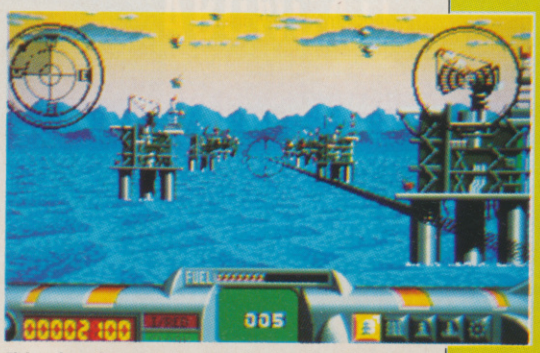
AMIGA

The fastest sprite-based 3D scrolling yet seen on the Amiga – coupled with some large, detailed sprites make *Shockwave* nothing short of breathtaking. The use of a detailed floor makes a world of difference visually when compared to the usual scrolling stripes or chequered effect. A catchy tune and explosive effects take up the audio side.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99dk	December

No other versions planned



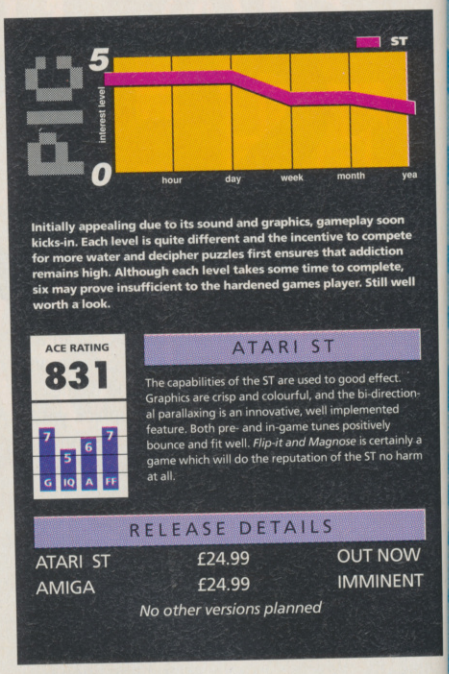
Flying along the sea quadrant, crashing into the oil rigs is pretty unhealthy. Flying over them is recommended.

ALL MAPPED OUT

The map section of *Shockwave* is where the strategic side of the game takes place. The large disc in the centre is a radar showing the four sections of your world, plus the proximity of the incoming aliens, marked with a red dot. The four icons in the corners of the screen show what purpose each quarter serves, plus the percentage of aliens overrunning the land. The second any of them becomes 99% overrun, you lose that quadrant, plus the service it provides. For example, should you lose the sea sector, your fuel supply is cut off, stopping you from flying out to defend yourself, effectively ending the game. The wait icon advances the game one game turn, increasing your money by a certain amount and moving the aliens inward one step. Clicking on done exits you to a corridor screen, where you can go either to the armoury or to the docking bay, out to the flight sequence.

Split-screen competitive cutesy from IMAGEWORKS

FLIP IT & MAGNOSE



Initially appealing due to its sound and graphics, gameplay soon kicks-in. Each level is quite different and the incentive to compete for more water and decipher puzzles first ensures that addiction remains high. Although each level takes some time to complete, six may prove insufficient to the hardened games player. Still well worth a look.

ACE RATING **831**

ATARI ST

The capabilities of the ST are used to good effect. Graphics are crisp and colourful, and the bi-directional parallaxing is an innovative, well implemented feature. Both pre- and in-game tunes positively bounce and fit well. *Flip-it and Magnose* is certainly a game which will do the reputation of the ST no harm at all.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99	IMMINENT

No other versions planned

Flip It and Magnose are two lucky guys. Winners of a Martian lottery, they get a trip to Earth and (there's always a bug in the lettuce) an assignment to return with millions of gallons of water for their dehydrated planet. The Martian to return from this vital quest with the most water will become a hero and be awarded two Gargoids – ensuring a life of wealth and ease for many years to come. So goes the plot of Imageworks latest game - the first to be programmed by newcomers Expanding Minds.

Six levels range from a jungle scenario to a farm house and, finally, a space station. Although gameplay is basically the same cute platform variant throughout (played on a vertically split screen), each level differs greatly in puzzle content, with its own specific characters and methods for obtaining H_2O. You can play either a single player game (in which the other character is computer controlled) or a competitive two player scenario. You are also given the option of selecting between in-game music and FX.

The miserable inhabitants crave something to bring the pzazz! back into their life. Provide for their needs and you will be rewarded with either a droplet of water (which you must catch in a bucket and return to your tele-pad at the top of the screen where it will be beamed aboard your ship), or another object which must be appropriately used.

You'll encounter apes, reptiles, a yeti, a chicken and other strange blobs and although not every one requires an object, those that do are identified by a drop platform (differing from the others) nearby. To save time, Flip-it and Magnose have the ability to carry up to four objects, four weapons and the bucket. Scattered throughout the levels are objects which, although not character-specific, will aid in your quest (such as springs for increasing jump-height). Food is particularly important as it is used to purchase traps for your competitor, giving you a temporary advantage. Once set, however, the traps are non-discriminatory and stumbling into a carefully laid booby of your own will see you temporarily disabled.

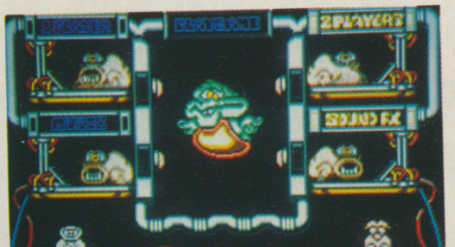
SCROLLING EAUVATION

Movement is straightforward, progress being made by a series of jumps and mid-air manoeuvres. Miss a footing and your character will be sent hurtling downwards to concertina on landing, losing you valuable food. The natives get restless too - the gorilla hurls nuts at you, while the second-level yeti drops rocks, for example. Although the heroes do not rely on energy, there is an imposed time limit indicated by a descending chain in the centre of the split-screen display (both of which move completely independently of one another). Aside from this, the display is constructed from a panel of 'objects held' boxes, accessed by holding down fire.

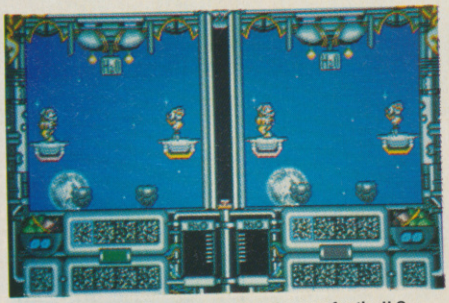
Each sprite is humorously and well designed in cartoon fashion - colour is used to good effect and animation well executed. What is most striking about the game, is the fact that the parallaxed background extends to both the horizontal AND vertical - an achievement!

In essence, *Flip-it and Magnose* is a platform derivative with what are described as 'several new twists'. The puzzles are entertaining and although occasionally a trifle quirky are never too obscure. Sound complements the game to a tee and the only real quibble I have is that, once practised, six levels may not be enough. Otherwise Expanding Minds have produced an addictive, professional game bringing a fresh breath to the platform genre.

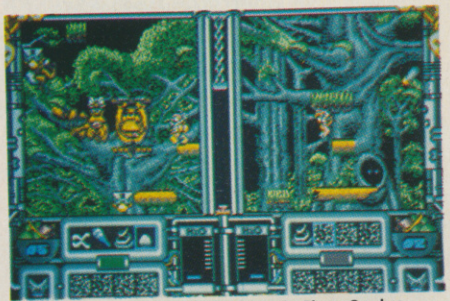
● Alex Ruranski



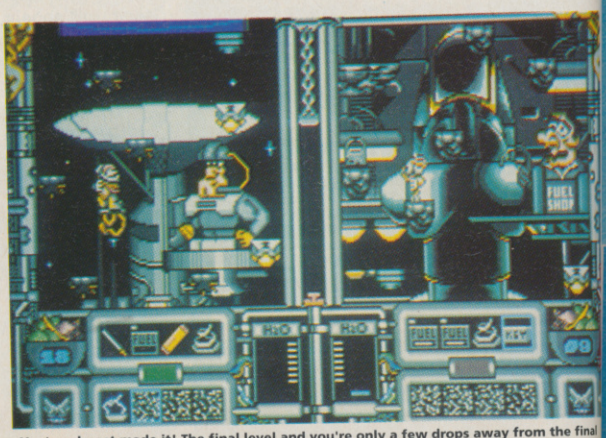
Getting started: the option screen is a riot as monsters get their backsides burnt and jab buttons to select your choices



...then you're into the game, each ready to go for the H_2O...



...and soon you're up against this beastie. Player One has found King Kong's cousin and has to drop a pair of nutcrackers onto the 'drop platform' – the small triangular feature below the gorilla. In return he gives you a 'bug' which you have to take to the frog, who will spit out a droplet of water



You've almost made it! The final level and you're only a few drops away from the final screen. Lack of extended challenge is the only serious weak point of the game

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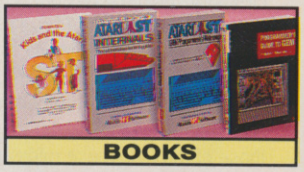
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SUBBUTEO

Programmed by Goliath and published by Electronic Zoo, *Subbuteo* bursts onto the screen accompanied by an original jingle and pictures bearing the obligatory official Subbuteo logo. You get the choice of playing either a single or league game. Single matches allow play against either a human or computer opponent and serve mainly as a practice ground for honing control skills. Once competent, the league (in which eight teams compete for dominance) awaits.

Having selected game type, the option is given to specify the time played over each half (up to 45 minutes) and one of three skill levels (novice, league and international), followed by a choice of kit colours. The final option before play gives you five team formation choices (see screenshots).

The pitch and players themselves are represented in 3D. What is innovative about this particular approach is that the pitch is moveable through 360 degrees and includes the vertical plane. Goliath have also incorporated a zoom feature to allow close inspection of both your and the opposing players - useful for planning strategies.

The game is controlled via icons situated along the bottom of the screen. These allow pitch manipulation, zoom and (most importantly) shot direction and strength, to be directly controlled. Having selected a player, clicking on the ball icon opens a window displaying the base of a Subbuteo figure and a finger. Clicking the mouse button sets the finger moving, whereby a second click stops it in the desired position. Once both flick-angle and strength have been set, the action is carried out in glorious 3D.

Play is governed by the "official" rules laid out according to F.I.S.A (Football International Subbuteo Association), differing somewhat from those of the F.A. These rules are accessible either in full or for specific manoeuvres by clicking on an icon of the pitch to the far right of the panel. All moves are covered and any made illegally are accompanied by a whistle and players being returned to their original positions. Moves covered include deadball, defending and positioning flicks. In essence the only differing rules are those such as disallowing shots from beyond a certain point (the shooting zone), repositioning players under certain circumstances, treating players that have left the pitch as though they are still in play and allowing only a limited time for each shot.

Whilst the rules themselves are fairly simple to understand (provided you have the patience to read them all), competent control of the players is considerably harder to master. The first few shots (if not games) will be spent sending players curving wildly off on unlikely trajectories, but once mastered shots may be fairly accurately judged.

Unusual representation works well and the ability to rotate the pitch through almost every angle is both innovative and excellently implemented, (the original version ran at 7 frames per second, and has been increased to 15 frames per second). Use of icons for manipulation provides the speed necessary when against the clock, giving a feeling of assistance rather than hindrance, so encouraging further play.

Whilst graphics are noteworthy, the same cannot be said for sound, which although tuneful at the outset, is confined (in game) to a warning whistle.

Transferring Subbuteo to computer format could have been disastrous. An idea that has been confined to tabletops for almost half a century is surely unlikely to survive the change. Having never been a fan of the tabletop (or even football proper), I was surprised to find myself enjoying Subbuteo. Initial inaccuracy fairly soon gave way to competent shooting and, as I imagine this will be the case for most players, Subbuteo should provide an alternative to the many football sims that swamp the market.

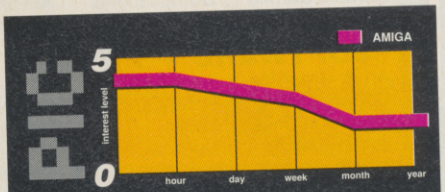
● Alex Rurans

An initial screen. View rules and select from five formations.

Eye in the sky. The tilt option allows full and partial overhead play.

Having zoomed out as far as you can go - just look at that panorama.

ELECTRONIC ZOO bring out a novel footy game that should have been programmed by Colonel Sanders...



First impressions are quite high due to the excellent 3D manipulation. Although gameplay may seem a little off-putting at first, this is minimal and soon conquered. The novel approach to play helps sustain interest but after a month or so, appeal may lie only with fans of the original.

ACE RATING **743**

G 6 IQ 5 A 3 FF 7

AMIGA

Not stunning graphically although the 3D works extremely well. Sonically disappointing too – even an original theme tune cannot justify the lack of in-game FX. but the gameplay's there: this is an accurate representation of the tabletop and provides even more excitement on-screen.

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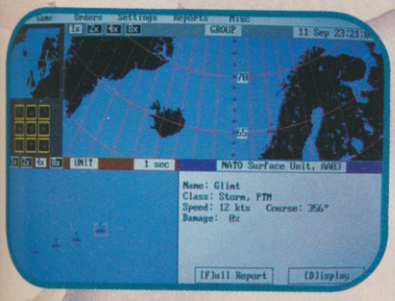

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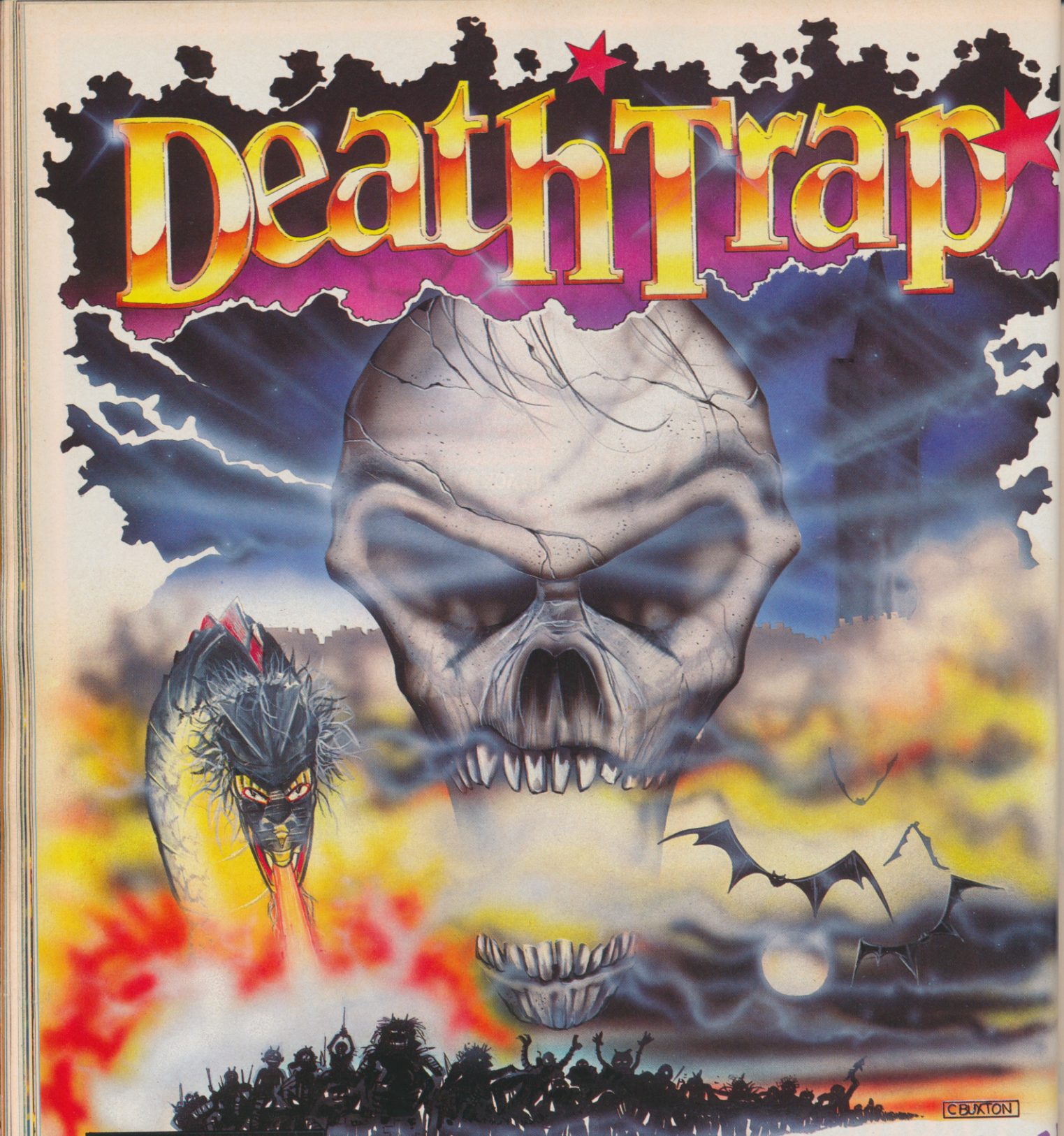

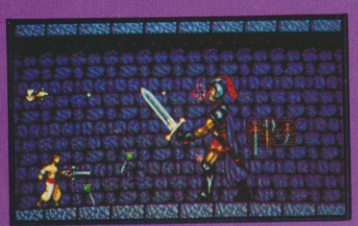

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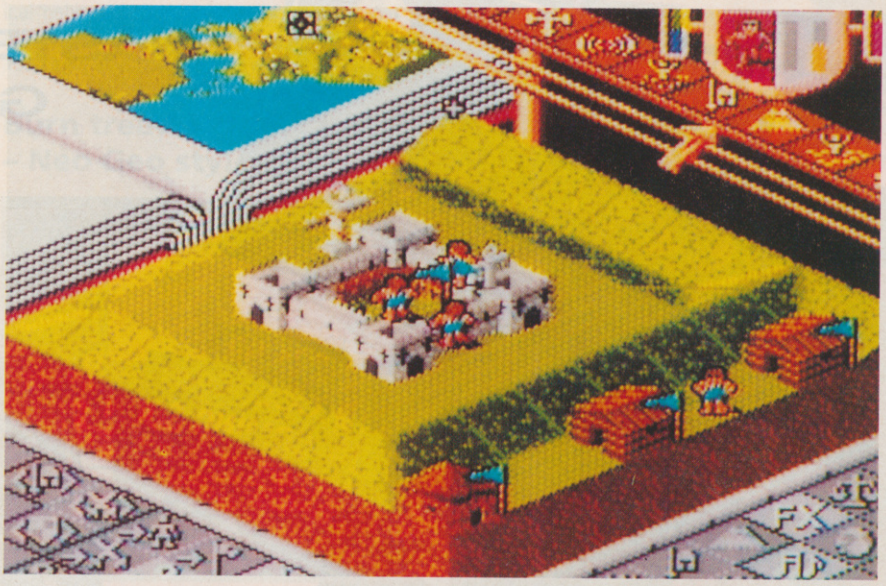
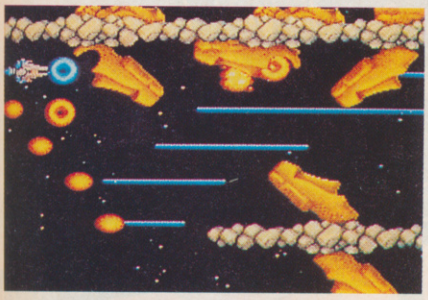
As Nintendo prepares to launch a new 16-bit console in Japan, Rik Haynes reveals the Super Famicom's specs and games...



No-one can doubt the worldwide success of Japan's leading console manufacturer. In the last five years Nintendo has sold something like 40 million Famicom consoles (known as the Nintendo Entertainment System in Europe and America), and is predicting sales of the Gameboy handheld console will top five million by the end of this year.



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Nintendo video game characters have become cultural icons in both Japan and America. These cute sprites appear in theme parks and their own TV cartoon series – you can even eat them for breakfast (cereal), lunch (burgers), and dessert (cake decorations).

Now the Japanese video games company that rivals Sony in terms of pure-profit has turned its attention to 16-bit consoles, a rapidly expanding market currently dominated by Sega. So will the Super Famicom beat the Megadrive?

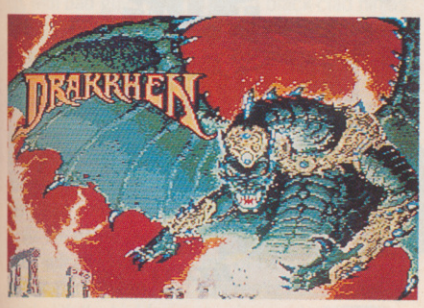
TECHNO-THRUST

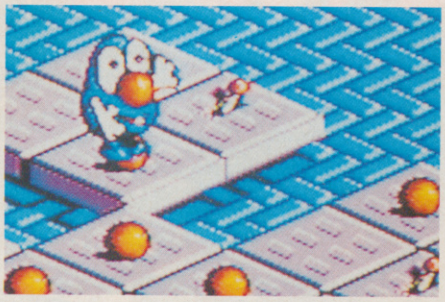
Nintendo's new console boasts an impressive tech-spec (see the Super Specs panel for full details), including a palette of 32768 colours, eight-channel 16-bit PCM stereo-sound and hardware-assisted object scaling (sprites which can enlarge and shrink). The Super Famicom will be launched in Japan later this month for an unbelievable 25000 yen (approximately £100).

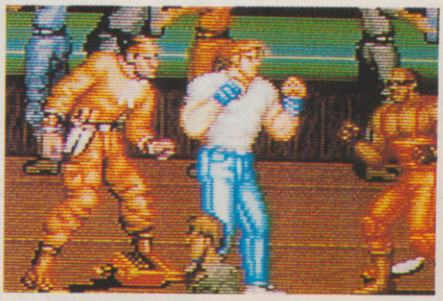
There are over 40 Super Famicom games in development at the moment. Three titles will be available at launch: *Super Mario World* (the latest addition to the Mario platform saga), *F-Zero* (fast futuristic racing-sim) and *Bombuzal* (fun puzzle game originally designed by Tony Crowther). The average price for a Super Famicom game is 8000 yen (around £32). Other games to be released this year on the Super Famicom include *Populous*, *Sim-City*, *Dungeon Master*, *Shadow of the Beast II*, *Final Fight* (a kick'em-to-death'em-up), *Gradius III* and *Drakkhen*.

There is currently no UK release date set for the Super Famicom, though rumours suggest Nintendo may launch its new corker of a console in Europe before the autumn of 1991. And that's not the only rumour circulating around the Land of the Rising Sun. Japanese pundits are speculating on the future release of a Super Famicom CD-ROM drive and a special adaptor allowing you to play NES cartridge games on your Super Famicom.

ACE will be receiving the Super Famicom console and games as soon as they're released in Japan... look-out for our definitive review in a near-future issue. Finally, a special thanks to our friends at ASCII Corporation in Japan for providing the pics used in this article.







SUPER SPECS

- CPU incorporates a customised 16-bit DMA circuit to speedup graphics and sound functions.
- 128K RAM, 64K video-RAM.
- Clock can be automatically switched to 1.79MHz, 2.68MHz and 3.58Mhz.
- Screen size of 256x224 or 512x448.
- 128 colours on-screen out of a palette of 32768.
- Can handle objects (sprites) of various sizes.
- Eight-channel stereo-sound and 32KHz sampling rate provided by 16-bit PCM chip.
- RF, composite and RGB video output.
- 28-pin edge connector (perhaps for a CD-ROM drive, modem, add-on keyboard...)

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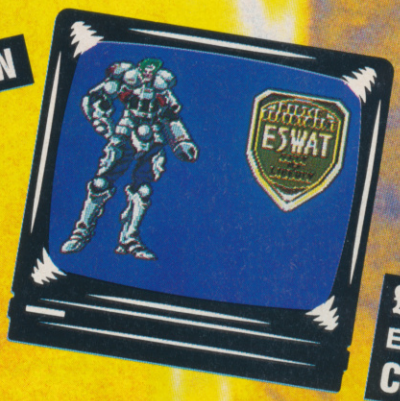

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RIDING HERO

Burn tread with SNK – Neo Geo style!

Coming, as it is, on the 'console of the future', you'd expect a little more from *Riding Hero* than just a run-of-the-mill race game. Not only does it offer you a straight motorcycle racer, it also gives you an adventure. Yes, an ADVENTURE! What will they think of next?

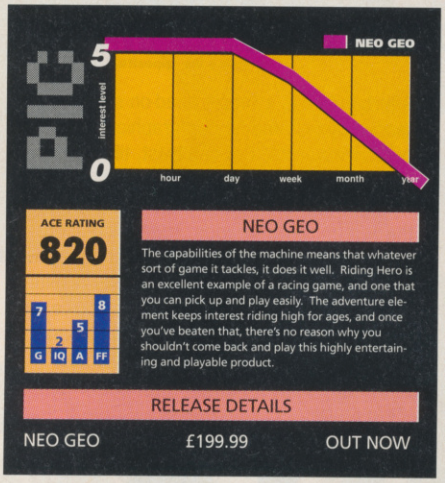
The first of the two games on the cartridge is a rather typical motor racer with a choice of four machines to ride. Racing in a field of eight, you have to complete two laps of each of the world's most famous courses, finishing in the first three to continue to the next course.

The adventure, on the other hand, is something quite novel. It takes place over three different screens: a map screen; a picture of your current location, where you can arrange races for money, and the race screen itself (involving a typical 'behind-your vehicle' view of the race, just like almost every other race game ever written). You begin as a novice racer without a bike, and have to progress up through the reputation ranks in your town until you finally meet Diamond Dave, King of the Bikers. Beat him, and you become the new ruler.

The controls are simple and uncomplicated. No gears, one button to accelerate, one to brake and one to ignite the turbo, a handy little gadget, with limited uses, that gives you a very short burst of very high speed. The screen display is clean and uncluttered, with the only overlaid information being two lines at the top of the screen that show your current speed and standings.

The actual race segment of the game is pretty uninspiring, but with the adventure you increase the lasting power of the game considerably. *Riding Hero* is definitely fun to play, and offers a novel twist on a well worn genre. Worth checking out on rental.

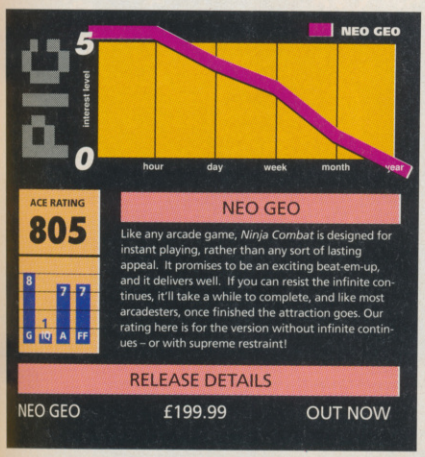
● Tony Dillon



The menu driven adventure section adds to long term interest

NINJA COMBAT

SNK pit you against arcade quality opponents



OK, so it's not the most original title ever, and on the face of it it isn't the most original game either. A left-to-right scrolling beat-em-up, with bad guys ranging from black-clad ninjas to large firebreathing robot dogs walking on at certain points of the scroll. As you bash the baddies, they drop weapons and bonuses that can be collected to heighten your own abilities, such as speed and power, or just to increase your offensive strength. After all, someone with a ten-foot broadsword is a far more formidable opponent than someone with a tiny dagger.

As the game progresses, it becomes very difficult indeed. Huge swarms of nasties come flooding on screen, and you really need to be quick with the highly responsive controls to win through. However, I still finished the game within half an hour, thanks to a nice little design flaw in the first batch of the Neo Geo consoles called 'infinite continues'. Every time you die, the machine prompts you to press START to continue and hey presto! you're back in the fight where you left off with a full complement of lives.

What happens when you're the offspring of an unholy union between Rocky and Rambo – you end up musclebound and beaten to a pulp by aggressive sprites

To finish any game that quickly is sad, particularly at this asking price. Speaking to Active Sales, who are handling the machine in this country, they tell us that SNK are rectifying this, which should make the games a little more competitive. Until then, you'll just have to have a little self control.

The presentation is top notch, with arcade quality graphics and sound, and even an arcade-style attract mode. On the bottom line, this game is fulfilling what the Neo Geo promises – a standard arcade machine for the home.

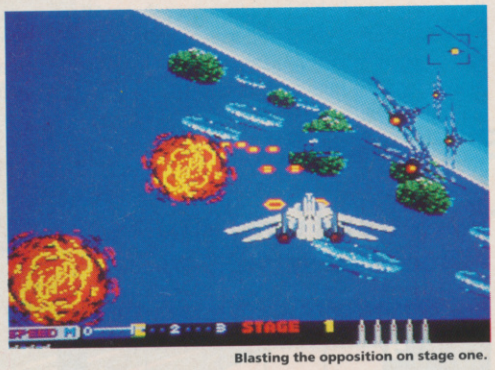
● Tony Dillon

AFTERBURNER II

Fly low and fast in this PC Engine shoot'em-up

Originally one of Sega's hydro-cabinet coin-ops, *Afterburner* has now hit the PC Engine at a mighty Mach 2. But does the lack of hydro-hardware costing thousands of pounds effect the game?

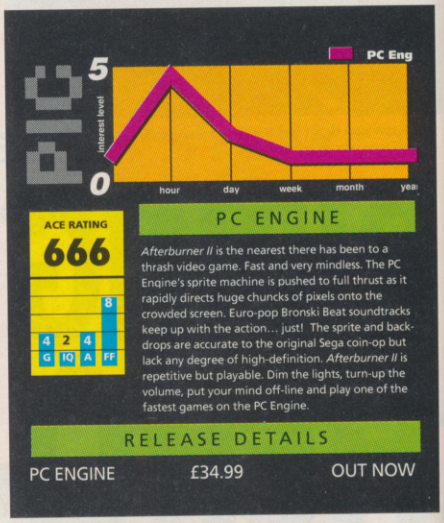
As a Navy Air Captain in charge of a F-14 Thunder Cat fighter you must wade through wave after wave of enemy fighters in an endless succession of total destruction. Your Cat is armed with fire-guided missiles and Vulcan cannon, and is capable of speeds in excess of Mach Two.



Blasting the opposition on stage one.

A brief piece of peace... the action stops while you re-load.

Afterburner II is a simple head-on shoot-em'up enhanced by fast and furious graphics. Your highly maneuverable Cat can twist, tilt and turn round the screen. It can even flip 360°. An 'artificial horizon' scanner is displayed at the top left of the screen, while weapon, speed and score stats are located along the bottom. The game is divided into multiple-stages, with a brief respite between each for reloading. Although you've an unlimited supply of Cannon blasts, the fire-and-forget missiles are strictly on a tight number basis. A sight appears on any enemy aircraft currently in range.



Afterburner II is packed with all the extra goodies usually found in Japanese games – including a neat '3D room' where you can play ball with the flying three-dimensional Afterburner II logo found on the title page. You can change its pattern, colour and speed, zoom in/out and rotate the logo around its x, y, and z coordinates. To be honest, this is probably the most innovative feature of *Afterburner II*.

● Rik Haynes

W-RING

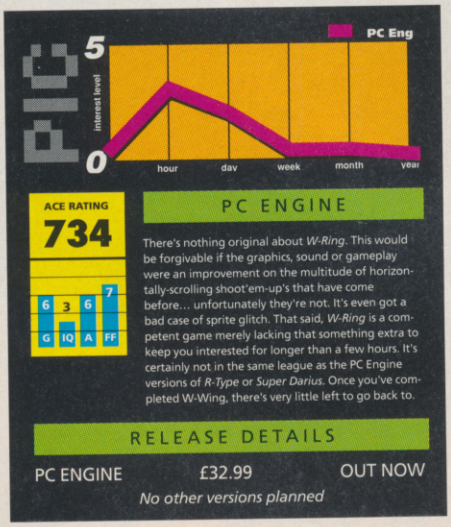
Nemesis-style shooting on the PC Engine courtesy of Naxat Soft

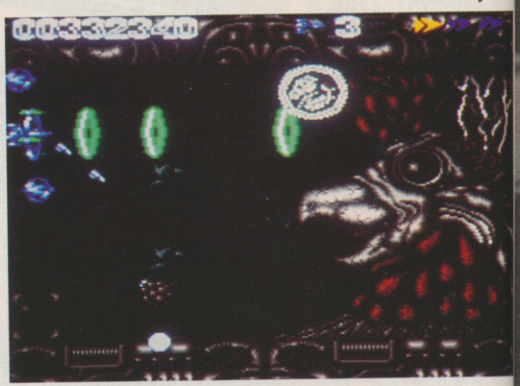
You've moved the multiples in *Nemesis*, you've released the ripple lasers in *Salamander*. Now do exactly the same in *W-Ring* 'The Double Rings' from Naxat Soft. That's right, Japan has just given birth to yet another multi-level horizontally-scrolling blast'em-to-hell'em-up.

W-Ring is a six-stage shooter with all the trimmings: extra missiles, ring beams, multi-way shots, lasers, multiples and gyro shields to collect – ordinary alien laser-fodder and end-of-level guardians to blast out of the screen.

The only trouble with the game? *W-Ring* is all too easy to complete. You're practically invincible once you've got a few power-up items. For instance, the level-guardian sprite at the end of stage 3 – a sort of triffid with a huge light-bulb on its head – can be quickly dispatched with a single squirt of your 'aqua toothpaste' laser. So get ready to knock-up some giant hiscores with this one!

● Rik Haynes

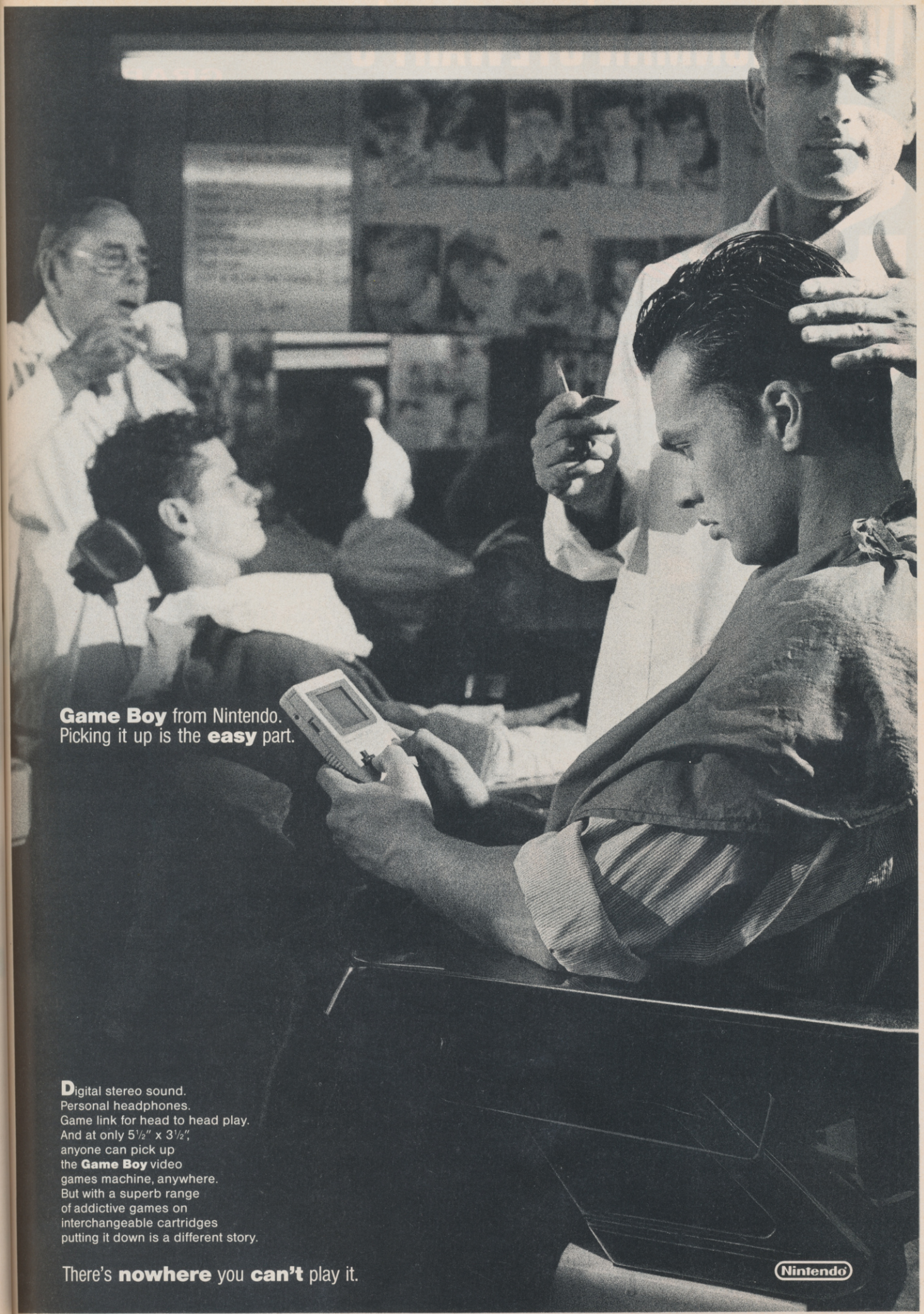




The beam laser seems to be the most impressive weapon.

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's a triffid with a light-bulb on its head!

Special thanks to PC ENGINE SUPPLIES (tel: 0782 712759) for supplying the games.



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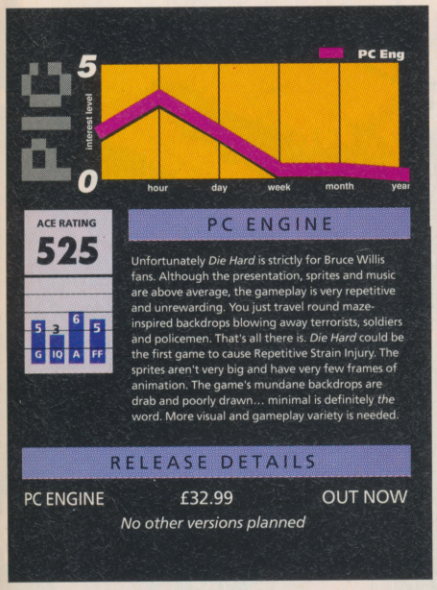
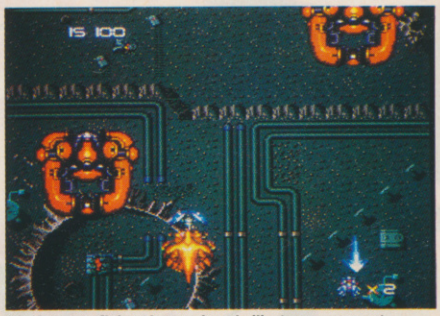


FINAL BLASTER

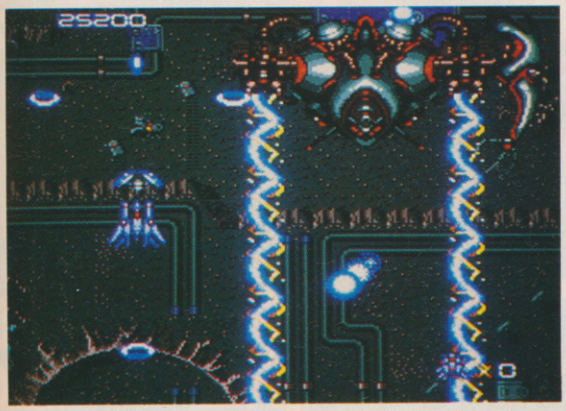
Namco blasts away on the PC Engine

How do you improve one of the best vertically-scrolling shoot'em-ups ever developed? *Gunhead* redefined the way people rate this style of game on not only the PC Engine, but also other home games decks. Now Namco is touting a successor – so is it the blasting business? Will this be the final fight for the number one spot?

As far as gameplay is concerned, there's no new features to be found in *Final Blaster* – just a well-tested selection of ideas tuned to near-perfection. You control a small but mobile space-fighter over a moving backdrop filled with various alien sprite ships of all shapes and sizes. Your job is to blast them away. If you hold down the fire button, your ship turns into a flaming phoenix which shoots out a massive fireball – useful for dealing with your larger foes. You manually select the speed of your fighter, and by collecting special pods which appear throughout the game you can power-up with extra shots, shields, lasers, multi-directional shots, missiles and multiples (which increase your weapons systems by a factor of one to three).



Turning your fighter into a phoenix-like 'mega-weapon'.



One of the nasty end-of-level guardians... be careful not to get caught between its electro beams.

The alien forces are equipped with some particularly nasty weapons such as a submunitions bomb which quietly drifts to the bottom of the screen, then unleashes a barrage of deadly missiles. The end-of-level guardian ship on stage one tries to trap you between its two laser beams while blasting you with blue bouncing ball bombs.

Final Blaster has 7 rounds – each featuring new alien craft with progressively better weapons, 16 weapon configurations for your spacecraft and some of the most demanding stages I've ever played in a PC Engine game. For game satisfaction its' got the right tactics.

● Rik Haynes

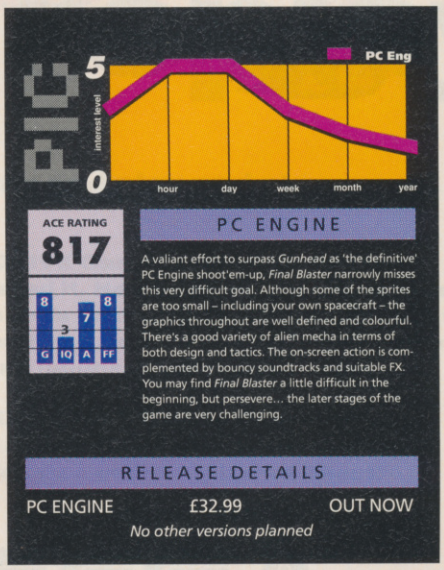
PC Engine owners can now play Bruce Willis... great eh!

DIE HARD

Based around the reasonably popular all-action movie, *Die Hard* sees you taking the role of 'Bruce Willis' playing a cop on a rescue mission. Some business executives have been trapped in a LA high-rise building by armed and dangerous terrorists, and you have to save them single-handed.

Punching your way out of trouble.

Die Hard has been inspired by the *Commando* genre of shoot'em-ups and is split into 10 separate stages. You start the game outside of the building in the local park. As you wander through the undergrowth you encounter armed terrorists, soldiers and policemen who immediately shoot at you. You must punch their lights-out before your energy is completely depleted by their bullets. Fortunately, these thugs sometimes leave their weapons for you to pick-up and use. The M16 rifle is the worst weapon as it's only single-shot. The Heckler and Koch automatic weapon is fast-firing, the grenade-launcher is great for wide-area attack but the flame-thrower is the best of the lot – providing you with a surround-field of fire. You can also collect a flak jacket for added-protection and a power bottle or medical kit to replenish your energy.



Although this Activision/Pack-In Video/Nihon Bussan release is enhanced by attractive bitmap 'splash' screens digitised from the film, *Die Hard's* relentless violence is just too repetitive to make you want to stay with it.

● Rik Haynes

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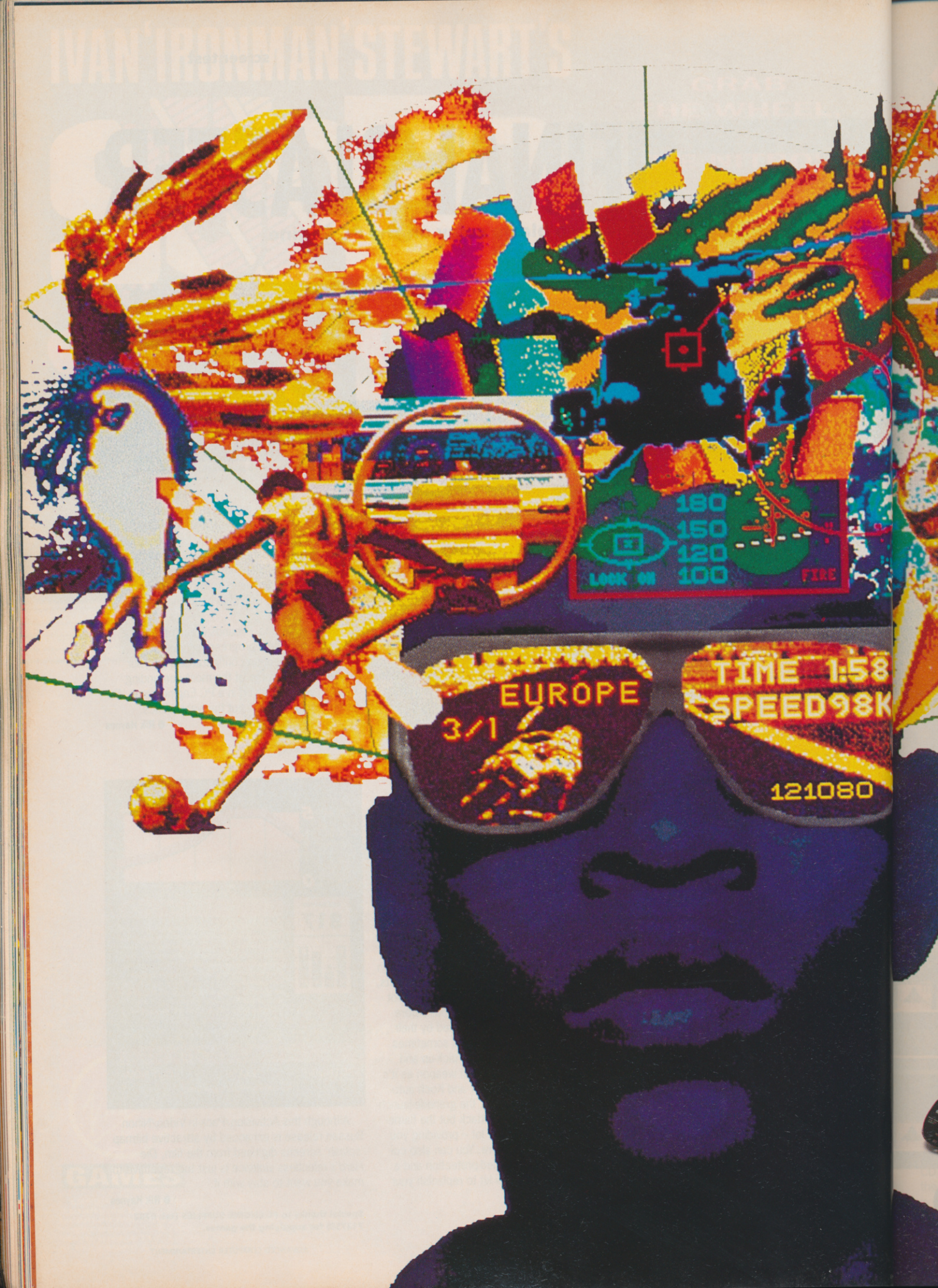
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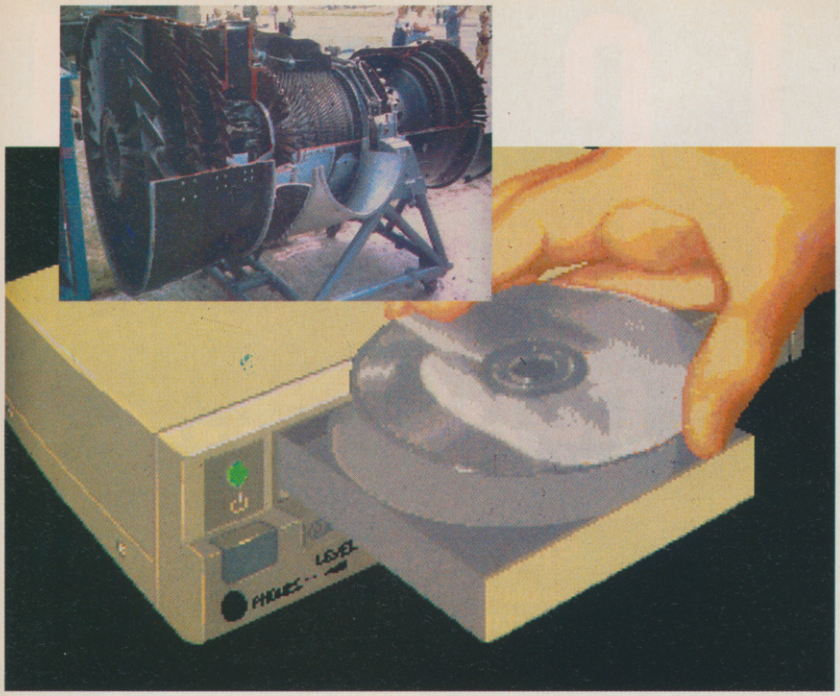


Living

Are you ready to become an interactive book-worm?

Imagine an electronic book on compact disc. You could have over 550Mb of information at the click of an icon. This data would be presented to you in a variety of interesting and informative ways – through the use of computer text, graphics, animation, sound and speech and/or motion video and CD-quality audio (for music and narration). Everything would be cross-referenced and instantly accessible. You wouldn't just read a book, you'd 'play' it.

The central ideas behind the 'interactive electronic book' concept form the basis of a new CDTV project currently under development at Digigraphic. At last, the multi-media novel, hyper-magazine and digital comic are here... well almost!

HOT WORDS

Digigraphic was formed four years ago to develop applications software for the Amiga. In that time it has created various projects including Eidersoft's *Prosound Designer*, *Pro Midi Plus* and *Video Magic*. It wasn't long before Digigraphic decided to get involved in the emerging multi-media market.

This Lutterworth-based company has been developing the *Living Book Publisher* system on the CDTV for the last 12 months. Its first application of the system, *Everyman's Technology Living Book*, is well under way and due for release in March 1991. It's just a shame about the sexist title.

"We have program development, multi-media research and computer graphic design departments now working on CDTV projects in probably the most powerful Amiga development environment in Europe," states Digigraphic.

ELECTRONIC BOOKMARKS

Although Digigraphic is being secretive about all the features found in its CDTV *Living Books*, here are a few intriguing glimpses of what you'll find in the book of the future.

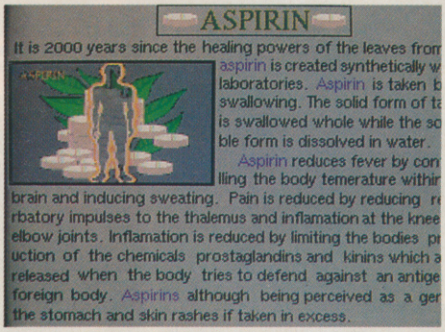
Graphics, computer animation and full motion video of any size and display mode (including images Dynamic Hires and sliced HAM modes). "Animations will support multi-channel frame accurate audio synchronisation," says Digigraphic. You can also have unlimited video animation and audio length due to the fact that Digigraphic's electro-books incorporate a disk read capability.

Living Books have powerful search facilities automatically built-in. You can search for animations, video, pictures and audio – which all have textual search tags. 'Hot' items are really handy. With the 'Hot Contents' page, you can select a chapter heading and immediately move to it. 'Hot Index' presents you with a list of all the references in the *Living Book*. And things really get interactive with 'Hot Words' – words on a page which can be selected and cross-referenced to other sections of the *Living Book* or glossary. Electronic Bookmarks let you move freely across references throughout a *Living Book* – you can then backtrack to the start point and continue 'reading'. Every line of the text can be magnified for people with impaired sight. A 'Narration' reads the text out loud.

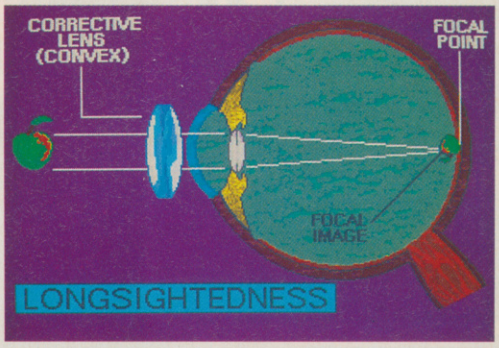
"*Living Book Publisher* allows a fully interactive book to be developed from start to finish within a single environment," explains Digigraphic.

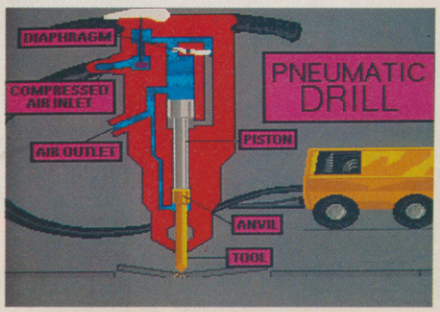
Lee Gibson at Digigraphic says, "*Everyman's Technology Living Book* will cover many aspects of technology from ball-point pens to satellites – explaining their operation and use. Some of the areas covered include: communications, entertainment, industry, medical and military. Each chapter will be illustrated with graphics, animations and motion video. This application is being produced concurrently with the publishing system giving us feedback on the functionality level and problems encountered with a full CDTV production". A CDI version of the *Living Book* is also likely.

What reading material would you like to see in *Living Book* form? Write to ACE and we'll pass your ideas onto Digigraphic... you never know, you could be 'playing' an interactive version of the *Amiga Hardware Reference Manual* next year! Send your ideas and comments to: LIVING BOOKS, ACE magazine, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.



A page from a Living Book... just click on the graphic box for a part- or full-screen animation with narration or music.





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So here I am, riding herd on six planets, checking out the cultists, keeping an eye on the droid assassins . . . same old stuff. Then, the idiots downtown decide they want me to bust up an "intergalactic drug ring".

But, it's not all bad, I do get to see Betty the Body at the Mind Zi tavern. And I get a little high just walking in the front door of the Mentant Temple. Some things never change, though – the scariest dudes I talk to are still real estate brokers.

Like they say at the academy, you gotta look before you transport. One wrong move and a guy could end up an artichoke.

Ace

Ace Powers
Star Police

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Screenshots from PC EGA version

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PC RES 101

UPDATES

Latest conversions this month for PC, ST, Amiga, and Spectrum

PC

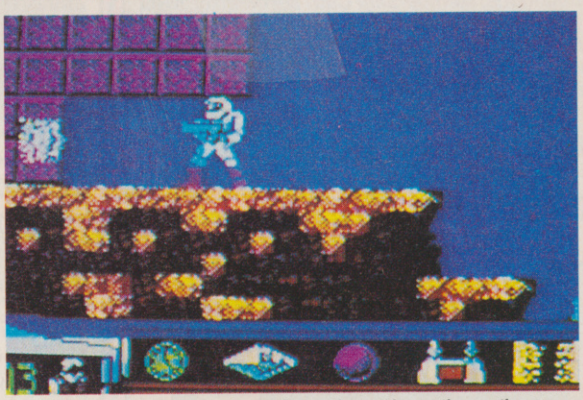
RESOLUTION 101
Millenium £24.99; Atari ST version reviewed issue 34; ACE Rating 917
It is the year 2038. A dangerous time to be living. A time when the unruly rule. In a last bid to combat this deadly reign of crime, the Government instigate a law known as resolution 101, whereby any criminal may receive amnesty for past misdemeanours by successfully tracking down other criminals. Reviewed in issue 34, the ST version of *Resolution 101* was hailed as "aggressive, bracing, crisp, devious...." amongst other superlatives. Fast 3-D, well executed graphics and gameplay saw the game ACE rated. Fortunately, the transition to PC has seen a retention of all these good points - unfortunately those aspects that were below par have also remained. The gaudy colour scheme does nothing to enhance what should be a dingy, oppressive atmosphere and sound may accurately be described as dire. Having said that, gameplay is the important factor and *Res 101* has plenty of that to hold your interest. If you're into fast-thinking, fast-acting software, you'd be hard pushed to find anything better that this – for now at least.
PC Rating: 900

AMIGA

RESOLUTION 101
Millenium £24.99; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 34; ACE Rating 917
Playing identically to the other versions, but with a slightly improved screen update. Graphics remain unchanged (colour is still slightly gaudy) being well designed but having rather less menace about them than I would have imagined. Sound FX have vastly improved over both ST and PC versions, but unfortunately the in-game music is less than fitting. Still however, a game worth buying.
AMIGA RATING: 924

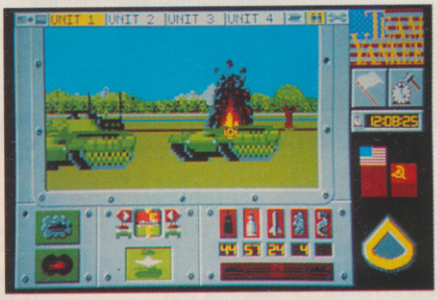
ST

SHADOW OF THE BEAST
Psygnosis £24.99; Amiga version reviewed Issue 25;ACE Rating 885
Some 12 months after the original classic, Psygnosis' *'Beast* finally makes it onto the ST. But to what degree of success? Fortunately for ST owners, *Beast* is virtually indistinguishable from the Amiga classic in every detail and although the original review stated that as an (at the time) Amiga only product, *Beast* would not have to suffer the confines of the ST, these restrictions would appear to have fallen by the wayside. The only noticeable differences are on-screen colours, which have been marginally toned-down and scrolling, whilst although not pixel perfect, does not detract from gameplay. The digitised sound is of high quality, (something many recent ST products cannot claim) with the melodies remaining as haunting as ever. The main criticism of *Beast* on the ST, is one that was levelled at the original, in that the difficulty presented by certain sections considerably outweighs that of others, (for example, many of the enemies may be felled with a single blow, whereas taking a wrong turn may bring you face to face with an insurmountable foe!) Other than this ST owners are in for a technically excellent and playable product. An audio-visual treat that appears to have aged very well in the face of competition. Well worth a look.
ST RATING: 815



ST Shadow Caption caption caption caption caption caption caption caption caption caption caption caption

TEAM YANKEE
Empire £24.99; Amiga version reviewed Issue 38;ACE Rating 893
Empire's tactical tank sim makes it to the ST in a form virtually indistinguishable from that of the Amiga. Placing you in control of four platoons each containing four tanks, the game is most noteable for its completely independant screen displays, allowing simultaneous control of each platoon. Graphics are identical to the Amiga - fast moving bitmapped sprites on a smooth scrolling scenery. The only real difference is in the sound department - perhaps inevitable - which is rather more grating on the ST. Otherwise, Team Yankee is as good a tank sim as you are likely to find on the ST.
ST RATING:879



ST Team Yankee

Spectrum Turrican

SPECTRUM

TURRICAN
Rainbow Arts £8.95; Amiga version reviewed Issue 35 ;ACE rating 912
The original version of this arcade adventure was perhaps the best arcade blast yet seen on the Amiga. The quality of gameplay and presentation were as near to arcade perfect as any game of its genre. The Spectrum version cannot hope to emulate that quality. Limitations aside, Rainbow Arts have successfully managed to cram in all the features of the 16-bit version and although this inevitably makes *Turrican* a multi-load, this is of little consequence. Graphics are colourful (if a little blocky), move well and the play area is huge. The internal speaker is used with successful results and the game as a whole whilst perhaps not groundbreaking, retains the playability of the original.
SPECTRUM RATING: 871

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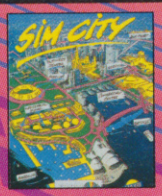

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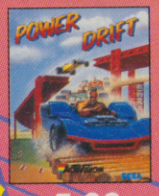

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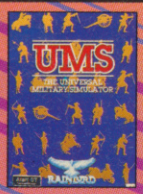

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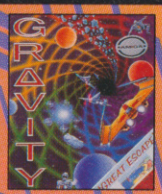

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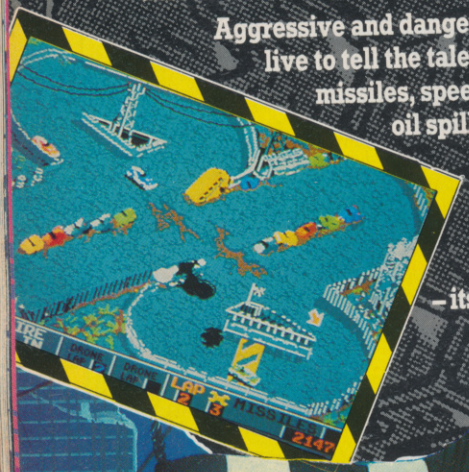

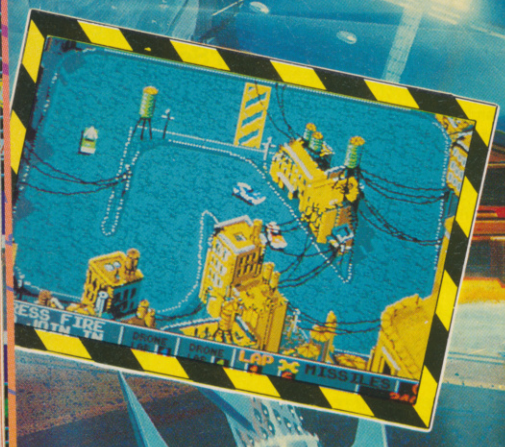

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DRAKKHEN

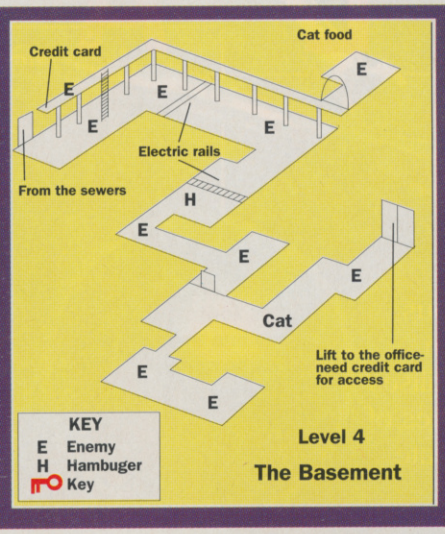
For those of you who have been cursing last month's subtle omission of the Drakkhen tips, rest easy with part three of the complete guide to this epic title. Rollin'....

Oyez! Oyez! All hail the return (at last) of the Adam Morley solution to *Drakkhen* – "The Quest For Tears" – in addition to the fourth part of Jons' Guide to Hacking, infinite energy in *Shadow of the Beast 2* and much more...

Before flinging yourself headlong into the quest proper, it is necessary to have elevated some of your party to higher levels to ensure that any progress is made at all! In order to succeed in Drakkhen, the printed solution should be followed exactly and the game saved regularly - (never save a game if you have lost a character, as all of them are needed). Oh and as a matter of interest, the tears of the quest's title are actually the gems worn on the heads of the Drakkhen Prince and Princess.

One piece of advice - when inside the Drakkhen palaces it is often quicker to explore with one or two characters rather than the whole group, but be sure that at least one character has the ability to open locked doors using magic. When moving about, be sure that the remaining party members are ready to cast protection or invisibility spells should they be attacked. It is in fact a good idea for all characters to move around in this state, as when an enemy appears the spells are cast automatically and the players enter combat mode.

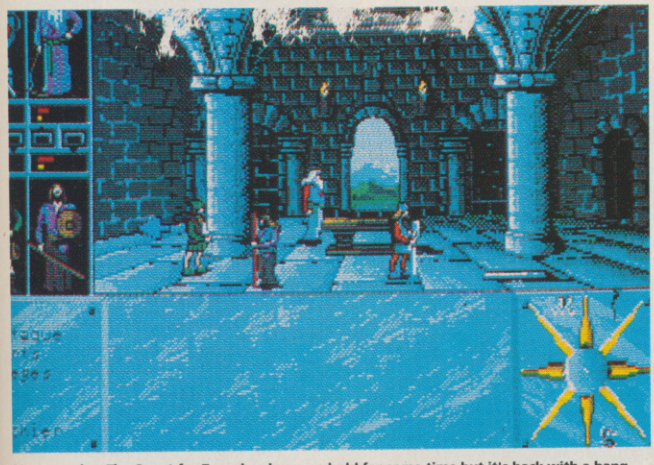
Here goes with the first two stages....



Rounding off our serialisation of maps for System 3's Last Ninja II, we have levels four to seven inclusive. The story so far finds our Ninja in the basement....

STAGE ONE

Enter Prince Hordtkhen's palace, remembering to wait until the shark's fin has passed under the bridge and emerged to your right. Operate the symbol between the two doorways in the wall facing you and enter the central doorway, leading to the first floor.



Mmmm....nice. The Quest for Tears has been on hold for some time but it's back with a bang. Here, a lovely selection of garments from the fantasy collection, sported by your party.

Having killed the lizard, use the warrior to enter the room on the left and dispose of the Drakh soldier. Unlock the door in the left wall. Don't allow any of the weaker characters to stray too close to the opening in the left wall of this room as it possesses a nasty bite!

Select a character other than the leader, disable the combat mode and enter through the door at the bottom left of the room. With luck you'll find yourself in Prince Hordtkhen's bed chamber, face to face with the man himself. Whatever you do, DON'T go into combat mode or he'll zap you. Behind him you will find a suit of armour; take it and retreat towards the door through which you came. Before leaving, question the Prince twice. He will tell you to take a message to his sister - this is your cue to leave as the Prince is easily offended, so don't hang about.

STAGE TWO

Leave the palace and travel east towards Princess Hordtkha's palace. Enter and you will find that the place has been attacked. Return to the Prince's castle at once (as instructed by a servant) and make straight for his room, remembering to disable the combat mode. He will be angered by the news you bring but will help you nevertheless, sending you to Prince Haaggkhen's palace where he thinks his sister is being held.

Whew, and that's only about one fifth of the complete solution! Back with more instalments nex' munf.

OP STEALTH

In last weeks episode, Secret Agent John Glames had just cheated death by starvation, suffocation and possibly boredom. Having escaped one hideous doom, Glames continues shaken, but not stirred, in his search for the mysterious Stealth fighter...

Having completed the arcade sequence, you should make your way back to the bank and exit the screen bottom left. You should now see a man on the beach, whom you should speak to.
USE the coins on the man.
You should now have been given a bracelet.
Go up the steps and back to the hotel.
Once inside, SPEAK to the receptionist.

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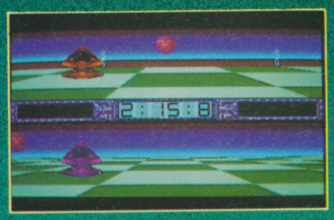

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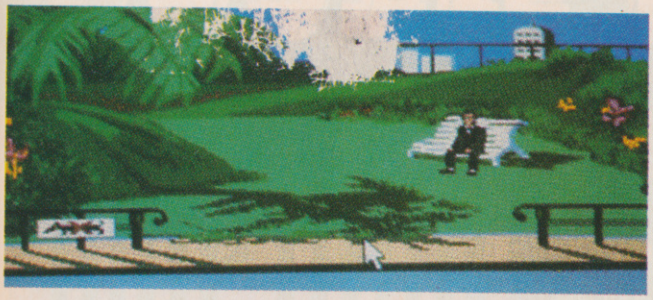
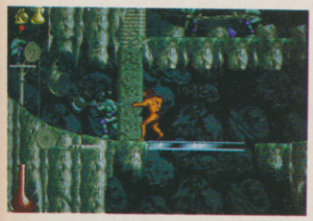


Go through the door on the right and up the stairs to the third floor.
Walk left to the end of the corridor.
SAVE the game at this point.
OPERATE the door.
AAAGH!... You will now be captured.

THE SECOND ESCAPE
You should now find yourself on a boat in the company of some less than friendly people.
OPERATE the bracelet - it should begin to whistle at which point you will be er... thrown overboard.
Upon reaching the sea-bed OPERATE the bracelet.
Swim over to the girl (very quickly).
OPERATE girl.
You should now swim to the surface and be automatically saved...

Will Glames get the girl, will Glames succeed in his mission and who the Hell is Will Glames? All these questions and more, will be answered in next months undercover issue of ACE.

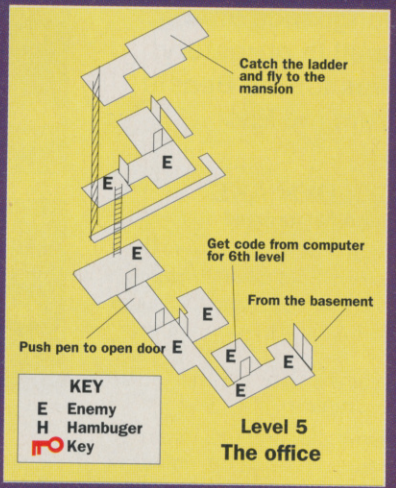


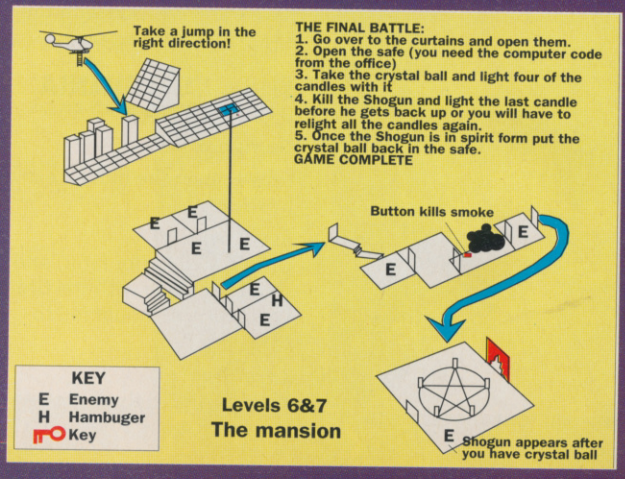
SHADOW OF THE BEAST 2

This game, in our opinion, is just too difficult for most gamesters. Thanks, therefore, to Joost den Hartog of Holland for the following...

When starting the game, run right until you meet the first man who tells you to "Halt...!". When he does so, press "A" and enter "TEN PINTS" (with space) for infinite energy. Yay! And Psygnosis tell us that the gameplay features get sexier and sexier as you progress – so this cheat could open up new worlds of addiction for you.

.... and out again. Ever closer to the final confrontation and victory! Once over it's back to the land of bamboo for a well earned holiday... for now.





CITADEL

For your delight and delectation, here's the continuing saga of Jon's guide to hacking, missed in last month's issue due to T'n'T changing hands. Retribution will be served... or something like that.

A quick look at my notes reminded me to go back and check out the mysterious subtracts I had found. First were the ones that took zero away from locations and executed as the traps opened. The subtracts are told to do something useful by another part of the program and seem to spend a lot of their time subtracting three, but that isn't important.

Obviously these offending beasts are connected to the routine that opens the traps. To prevent the traps opening, I traced the program backwards to a conditional branch at which the program below it executes only as a trap opens, whilst the program above it executes continuously. Once I have found that, I need to find stores into the location that makes the condition 'open trap X' true, and neutralise them.

After tracing back for some time I ended up somewhere in the middle of a routine that makes sure the on screen display of your lives does not spill above nine when you obtain an extra. This indicated very strongly that I was totally lost. Instead of making my way forward from where I was, I started from scratch. I found my stupid mistake, took out the ol' doobrey, re-entered the wassiz-name and now, Citadel keeps its traps shut. After a thorough test, it turned out that if I completed a level after NOT letting the traps open from the very start, then the traps on the following level REFUSED to open when I removed the cheat, a problem I shall solve later on.

The other subtracts were executed when you warped a level and when you changed sides. If I trace the code back I can find the condition that must be true to make the player warp to the other side of the level, in this code will be another condition that indicates the player has finished the level. I did the business and had some fun swapping sides in silly places. I traced the code forward until I found a promising looking branch and by making both the appropriate conditions true, I could jump to the next level at any time.

Right then, now there isn't much more rummaging about to be done. I would like to find the bit that gives your energy back when you collect the appropriate pod. I know the location for the players' energy, so a hunt for the increment instruction should do the trick. There is only one occurrence of energy incrementation and it appears in a bit of code that looks like this:

- *What sort of number is X?*
- *If it is positive then GOTO the rest of the program.*
- *If player has less than 16 energy then GOTO program* INCENG.
- *Make X positive.*
- *Initialise 'pling' sound.*
  INCENG: *Add one to player's energy*

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

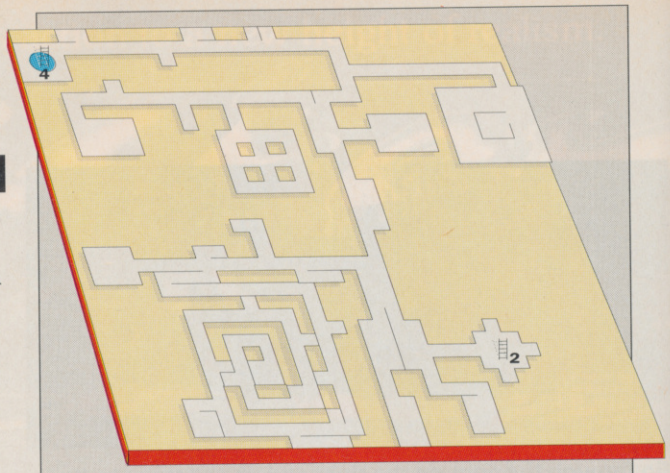
..... Rest of the Program.

This program is executed at the same rate as your energy increases. You can probably see that making X (in this case location $20ED) a negative number starts the energy increasing cycle. In my travels I also found a number of stores to the location that holds the player energy level. One of them is among a sequence of forty successive stores to various memory locations in the game setup sequence. It took me about two minutes to reduce the code to 63% of its original size. Another thing I found was that a cheeky little fellow among the energy stores neatly steals energy from your craft as you innocently buy weapons, but I soon put a stop to his game.

Well, that's all the room we've got for in this months' instalment. The next listing will follow as soon as we can shoehorn it in...

XENOMORPH

Back for the attack with the continuing solution to Pandora's space odyssey - this month, tips for levels four to six and the map for level four.



XENOMORPH Level 3 Maintenance ducts 1

LEVEL 4
There is nothing on this level that you could possibly want, with the exception of the card. The best tactic is to grab it and run back to level 3, due to the fact that there is an alien of indestructible proportions on the lurk! Once on level 3, walk to ladder I, take the RL ammo and move on down to level 5.

LEVEL 5
The six marauding aliens here mean that you must be prepared to move fast and accurately - no time for mistakes! Run to area 8 and pick up all six objects that you find there (opposite the entrance). Once collected, run out REMEMBERING TO CLOSE THE DOOR BEHIND YOU. When you've time to breathe, drop your old clothes (ahem!) and don those you have just collected. Go to area 9, (but be ready to blast the two aliens you'll encounter on the way) and take both RL bullets from the Anti-Grav Units. Find the maintenance area and pick up all the chips you need. (Just in case you're hungry it, there's food in area 10.) Go to ladder K, and down to level 6.

LEVEL 6
This level is entirely safe from nasties. All you need to do is collect the chips; card; battery; food and the charge for your gun. Having done so, it's back up to level 5 where you should go to area 11. Collect everything and make your way to area 12. Blast those nasties, walk to ladder L where you'll find a grenade. Take it and go down to level 7....

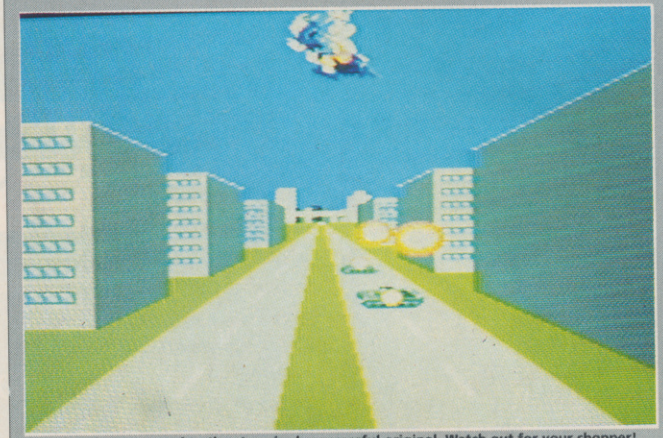
More next month. Until then you'll just have to struggle bleary-eyed through the long evenings on your own!

console corner

Back with a vengeance after a spell in purgatory. Tips for the Beasts from the East...

THUNDERBLADE II
Sega Master System

When the 'GAME OVER' message is displayed, press button 2, down and right simultaneously, to award yourself two 'continue' options.



The thunderous sequel to the stormingly successful original. Watch out for your chopper!

GOLDEN AXE
Sega Megadrive

On the character select screen, hold down button B and pull down and left diagonally to reveal round select.

NEMESIS
Gameboy

Begin play and press 'start' to pause. Press up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B, A. You should now find you have every weapon with the exception of speed-ups!

Two tranquil scenes from the Megadrive interpretation of the delicate Golden Axe.

THE CASTLEVANIA ADVENTURE
Gameboy

How to gain the hidden extra lives:

Level One
Obtain a whip (for later) and shoot the torch with the fireball. The 1UP should fall to the ground.

Level Two
Jump across all three moving platforms, but do not use your whip whilst you are in the air. Presto, an extra life.

Level Three
Wait for the ceiling to fall, then hit the tower four times, making sure the last strike is very late. Run back to the torch, jump and whip it to collect the extra life.
Mizanur Rahman. North Humberside

DRAGON BALL
NES

When your energy begins to run low, pressing DOWN on the 2nd controller replenishes it, while Pressing B on the 2nd controller allows you to skip levels.
Jody Goodall. Manchester

Well, it's goodnight from me, and it's goodnight from me. My sincere apologies to all those who were expecting the solutions to *Op Stealth*, *Chaos Strikes Back* and *Xenomorph*. What can I say, down from five pages to three! Slaughtered in my prime! But the editor assures me that next month we'll be back up to size....

Thanks to all those who contributed tips. Keep 'em coming (especially the consoles) - ACE needs YOU!

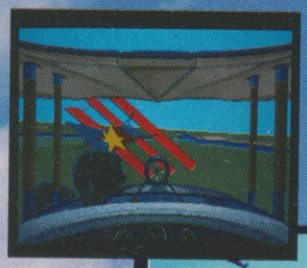
DOUBLE DARE YOU.

Blue Max

ACES OF THE GREAT WAR

WWI Air Combat Simulation

How strong are your nerves at 2,000 feet, with an armed Fokker DR.I on your tail? Forget glory, friend. Think survival.



VGA color air combat sequence

Strategy mode split screen with 3D Hexboard

Take control of one of eight classic WWI fighters and find out how good you really are. Fly with the best—Richthofen, Fonck, Mannock, Rickenbacher—and learn their tricks and techniques.

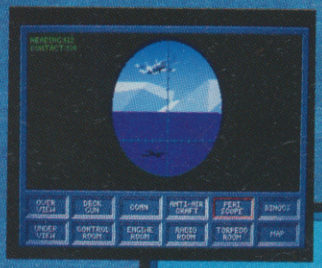
- Action dogfight, solo, and team missions for one or two players using a single computer with any combination of keyboard, joystick, or mouse.
- Strategy Dogfight: For the skilled purist, Blue Max acts like a highly-intelligent strategic board game, allowing you and your opponent to work out detailed battle sequences and play back the moves in "realtime" 3D.
- 8 airplanes to choose from, each with its own highly-detailed flying characteristics.
- Perform missions with, as, or against the Aces of the Great War.
- Dozens of historical missions around 4 different locations within France.

• VGA 256 3D COLOR GRAPHICS, • ORIGINAL MUSIC, SOUND EFFECTS FOR GAME BLASTER, ADLIB SYNTHESIZER CARDS

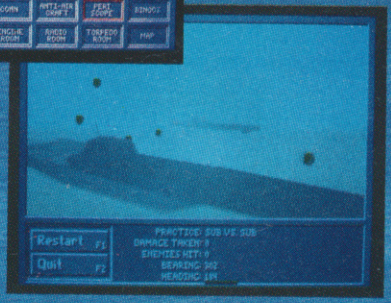
DAS BOOT

GERMAN U-BOAT SIMULATION

Do you think well under pressure? How about 300 pounds per square inch of pressure? Take a deep breath, captain....



VGA periscope view of enemy aircraft



VGA 256 color mine field under North Atlantic

Winter, 1941. The icy waters of the North Atlantic. The deeper you dive, the greater the pressure. Depth charges explode around you, banging on the hull of your U-boat like iron fists. Nerve and cunning make you the terror of the Allied convoys.

- 3D submarine warfare: For the first time, a sub warfare game lets you deal with threats below *and* above the surface in a true three dimensional environment.
- Real communications: Use the German Enigma coding machine to send and receive information.
- Many missions to choose from—into the North Atlantic and Arctic, inland along the coast of Norway, into the Bay of Biscay, and through the Straits of Gibralter.
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For further information on Mindscape products and new releases please call: 0898 234214

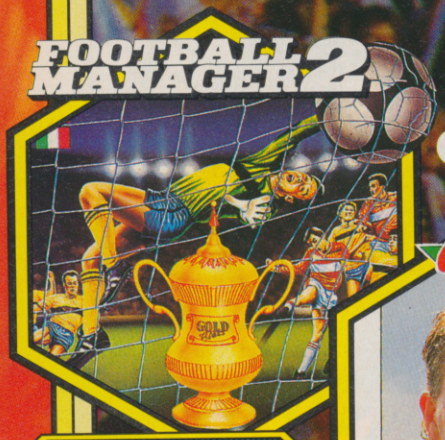
4 FOOTBALL FANATICS

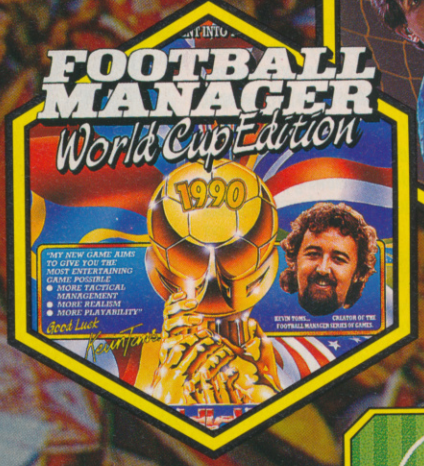
4 GREAT GAMES

SOCCER MANIA

COMPILATION

4 GREAT NAMES





FOOTBALL MANAGER 2
An all time great from Kevin Toms, inventor of the world's greatest selling football game. Man to man marking, choice of formations and substitutions, tackling, crosses and diving goalkeepers, Football Manager 2 is full of action with spectacular graphics.

Screen shots from various formats.

GAZZA'S SUPER SOCCER
Gazza mania is about to hit your computer screen! Realistic Ball

control allowing you to chip, curl or dribble through the opposition, maybe one day you'll have the skill of Gasgoine himself.

FOOTBALL MANAGER-WORLD CUP EDITION
Enter the international arena with a World Class game from Kevin Toms. This will be the chance for you to manage the national team into sporting history.

MICROPROSE SOCCER
Football crazy, football mad, this will challenge your skills right from the kick off. With features that range from overhead kicks to an overhead view of the pitch, you'll play for much longer than extra time.

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Enfield, Middlesex EN1 1SJ

Addictive
LIVE THAT DREAM

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

CLASSIC SPLITS

Hall Of Fame curator John Minson gets schizophrenic as he rearranges some famous people's faces.

Cheese, clogs and canals maybe, but the Netherlands have never been famous for software. However in 1986 Dutch programmers Ruud and Ernest Peske produced a neat little game for Domark which was to bring the fledgeling company one of its first major successes...not to mention threats of legal action.

Twelve months earlier Ernieware had produced a game called *The Evolution*; a fact I remember only too well because I was the only British journalist who bothered to review it. It was a solid but uninspiring example of a now thankfully defunct genre, the computerised block-shift puzzle. It did pave the way for this highly addictive development though.

BREAKIN' UP IS HARD TO DO

Split Personalities, as it was later called (see box), was a distinct evolution from *The Evolution*. The aim was simple; rearrange squares in a five by four grid to create jigsaw portraits of various luminaries, from Maggie to Ronnie Reagan, Sir Clive Sinclair (in the days of the Spectrum something of a star himself) to Alan Sugar, Bogart to Monroe. All of this was against a time limit, naturally.

The real development came with the addition of novelty tiles which caused random events, ranging from the merely inconvenient to the downright terminal or, if you got lucky, the beneficial. Just as special bricks turned mundane old *Breakout* into endlessly addictive *Arkanoid*, these bonus blocks gave a whole new dimension to an ancient formula and transformed it from a mere micro version of a Christmas cracker novelty into a real computer game.

On pressing fire, the tiles popped out of the top left of the frame along an empty row which could hold four squares. If you obtained part of the picture all you had to do was manouevre it into place with relevant twitches of the joystick, sliding it as far as it would go, left or right, up or down.

Any sections which appeared too soon, such as the top left of the picture which was irrelevant early on, could be shoved through doors in either side and at the bottom of the frame to join the back of the queue. On the lower levels the doors opened and shut but as things got harder they remained open, making it all too easy to lose a piece you needed. You could also inadvertently shove a piece off the play area by banging into it with another one. And there were cracks in the walls which zapped squares on impact. The doors were also required to deal with dangerous special tiles, such as the bomb which fizzed for five seconds before it blew up, taking one of your three lives. Disposing of it in the early stages was usually easy but if you had half a picture built you could find the exits blocked. Even then you may have held disposal to the last second because hitting it with a tap tile not only neutralised it but also generated a 5000 point bonus.

There were other special benefits from bashing tiles together. A collision between two diamonds put the clock back by up to a minute and a bullet and pistol combined to double your bonus. The destructive effects of match meeting petrol can are easily imagined though.

Naturally everything became more frantic as the levels progressed with more special squares appearing and increasingly inconvenient doors. But it offered perfectly balanced playability, so that each time you got that bit further... and just had to have another go!

Cursor control in *Splitting Images* made selecting blocks easy. You just placed it over the piece you wanted to move then twitched the joystick in the relevant direction. The section slid away until it hit the wall or another block.

HALL OF FAME

How does a game qualify for the Hall of Fame? It may have been a best seller in its day or overlooked and underrated. But one thing's for certain, it led the field, either creatively or technically. Clones don't qualify, however competent. And it's got lasting appeal. It's the program you still want to play after years - not weeks. So if you've got any suggestions, drop us a line.

"Never come such division 'tween our souls!"

Shakespeare, Julius Caesar

RUBBER (LEGAL) SUITS

Until *Split Personalities*, Domark was best known for its massively hyped prize adventure *Eureka* and the lost opportunity of the first Bond licence *View To A Kill*. When Ernieware's demo cassette arrived it contained pictures of a standard hitherto unseen on the Spectrum. Domark delight doubled when they were told there was a game to go with the graphics.

Ever deferential, and probably with an eye to possible knighthoods, Dominic and Mark checked with Buck House whether the Queen would like to appear. The answer was a frosty 'no', but Chuck and Di were delighted and Andy and Fergie left it to the Dom's discretion – after all, they could always cart them off to the tower if they disapproved.

Less lenient were the latex lawyers of Spitting Image, who complained about the similarity between the program's original title (*Splitting Images*) and their satirical show. So in a matter of days the game gained a new name (*Split Personalities*) and the packaging was redesigned. The gameplay stayed the same though and remains to this day a demonstration of how addictive a simple brain-teasing formula can be.

The original packaging for *Split Personalities* – the Spitting Image team thought the name was the spitting image of their own and Domark retitled the program....

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126 ACE Charts
The best charts around – based not on hyped sales but reviewer's ratings in ALL UK magazines. Not only that, but there are prizes to be won as readers attempt to predict next month's entries.

155 Joystick Judgements
Want a new stick for Christmas? Mark Smiddy presents the definitive guide, complete with switching info and prices.

159 Hot off the Shelf
Christmas is coming and the aunts are gathering in the sitting room. Time to sneak upstairs with a new game. Alex Ruranski with the titles, currently in the shops, that belong in your collection.

131 Hard Sell
Hardware and software facts about the current crop of 16-bit machines for those of you planning an upgrade this Christmas.

139 Direct Line
...to YOUR micro. If you own one of the ten major micros or consoles, there's a section for your computer here as ACE correspondents talk man to machine...

153 Competition Winners
If you've entered any of our recent competitions, you could be due for a prize. Check your luck out here

173 ACE Crossword
The infamous ACE Crossward offers you a chance to practise your word-skills and win a prize into the bargain

161 Adventureline
Pat Winstanley with her regular tips section for dedicated adventurers.

147 The ACE Diary
Our monthly guide to what's on where and what's out when

166 Shopwatch
Dirk Longhorn with a view from the other side of the counter...

176 Encyclopaedia Micromannica!
Over the years ACE has consistently given gamesters the low down on entertainment technology. Check out the subjects we've covered in the past and make sure you're up to date

175 PD Update
Mark Smiddy with another selection of cheap software

174 ACE Readers Pages
Small ads, big sales. Your chance to buy, sell and tell the world.

ACE has brought you nearly 40 issues, all packed with info on games technology. If you're missing any back issues – such as this one, covering the Philips CD-I machine – then check out page 176

ACE CHARTS

The ACE Charts give you the definitive list of top scoring games EVERY MONTH – as reviewed by ALL British games magazines.

Well, this month not quite all the magazines, because sadly our charts compiler has had to go into hospital. We all wish her a speedy recovery and, in the meantime, she's still managed to include almost all the mags in her survey.

If you're new to this section, you should know that each month we print the top five games, as reviewed in the latest editions of computer magazines, for each of the main computer formats. Because these charts are based on review ratings around the country, they make an excellent buyers' guide....

We also give prizes awa each month to anyone who can predict next month' entries. You can win up to £150 worth of software for your machine, so it's always worth exercising your vast knowledge of software market trend and submitting an entry.

Because software prizes have to be ordered from third parties, there are inevitably some delays in delivery. But if you experience ANY disappointments, please phone the Editor on 071 251 6222 Ext 2467 and we'll put it right.

Don't forget!
You can win a prize by predicting next month's charts and stock-market entries. See opposite for full details. Latest winners announced on page 153.

AMIGA

Captive	Mindscape	91
F19 Stealth Fighter	Microprose	91
Pang	Ocean	90.75
Supremacy	M. House	87.5
Simulcra	Microprose	87.25

Supremacy takes a drop and *F19* climbs one place, although its rating hasn't changed from last month. *Captive* should still be in there in next month's chart, but there are still some hotties coming up for Christmas.

C64

Complete Games Centre	CDS	92
Olli and Lissa 3	Cartoon Time	89
Lords of Chaos	Krisalis	88
ACE/ACE 2	Encore	87
Quattro Power	Code Masters	86

The budget games take over in the C64 chart this month, with CDS's compilation at the top. Let's hope we get some strong full price product this Christmas for a machine that still deserves a lot of support.

AMSTRAD CPC

Iron Lord	UbiSoft	87.17
Monty Python	Virgin	78.84
Quattro Sports	Code Masters	76.5
Night Hunter	UbiSoft	76.5
Skate Wars	UbiSoft	76.42

Ubi Soft threatens to take over on the CPC (probably reflecting the continuing strength of the machine in France), with *Iron Lord* indisputably the critic's choice this month.

IBM PC

4D Boxing	Mindscape	95
Wonderland	Magnetic Scrolls	94.5
Midwinter	Rainbird	93.9
Breach 2	Impressions	90
Search for the King	Accolade	69.25

Wonderland is still getting rave reviews, but Mindscape's novel approach to *4D Boxing* seems to have wowed everyone. Some high-scoring games around on the PC, but not much strength in depth.

THE STOCKMARKET

In addition to our games charts, we also have a bit of fun with the figures each month when we produce the ACE Stockmarket. It's a list of the top 25 softcos as determined by the ratings their games are currently receiving. You can see their fortunes rising and falling in each issue...

First, we calculate the average mark that each publisher receives for every one of its games on each format: this is the rating in the second column below. So, for example, if the company is great at sourcing 16-bit games but botches up its 8-bit conversions, that will pull down the average mark, even if you can see one of its titles heading up the Amiga, ST or PC charts. If all the games are excellent, or if the company has just one brilliant program doing the rounds at the moment, it will have a high rating. The third column, labelled '+ or -', shows you how much the publisher's score has improved (or deteriorated) compared to last month.

The last column shows how well a company's games have fared compared to the *Software Index*. This single figure represents the average review mark (expressed as a percentage) that all games, all formats, received during the last month. It's a quick guide to how good the current crop of titles is, and each company's Index score shows how well their games compare to the norm. For example, in this month's chart, Core Design's current titles are worth 9.11 percentage points above average - according to the industry's reviewers.

We print only the top 25 companies each month. In fact, we keep tabs on all of them, but you don't want to read through a list of over 100 names in every issue.The asterisks by The Sales Curve and Klassix's names indicates that these are brand new entries to the Stock Market company counter.

Finally, we take care that the information here is genuinely useful. To that end, we don't count companies which have only received a single solitary review.

Software index: 75.39
Rising sharply - and the big Christmas titles are just around the corner!

PUBLISHER	SCORE	+/-	INDEX
Magnetic Scrolls	93.75	-3.75	18.36
Gremlin	87.88	+14.38	12.49
Cinemaware	86.7	+0.7	11.31
Microprose	86.33	-3.55	10.94
Electronic Arts	86.1	+7.27	10.71
Mindscape	85.5	+4.43	10.11
Hit Squad	85	+9.33	9.61
Micro Style	84.98	+5.27	9.59
Empire	84.58	+4.08	9.19
Core Design	84.5	+1.83	9.11
*Sales Curve	82.44	n/a	7.05
Cartoon Time	82	n/a	6.61
Smash 16	81.5	n/a	6.11
Activision	80.75	+11.49	5.36
UbiSoft	79.17	+11.22	3.78
Virgin	79.14	-5	3.75
Accolade	78.42	+14.59	3.03
Dinamic	78	+19	2.61
Domark	77.94	+0.41	2.55
Software Business	77.5	+0.87	2.11
*Klassix	77.5	n/a	2.11
Thalion	77.17	+14.44	1.78
Zeppelin	77	+17.75	1.61
US Gold	76.38	+3.95	0.99
Millennium	75.5	+6.96	0.11

WHAT THE FIGURES ABOVE MEAN...

First, of course, you've got the game. Then the software house and – in the last column – the average score (converted to a percentage with typical ACE precision to two decimal places) the game received in ALL reviews during the last month. Don't forget that the review ratings are taken from all UK magazines, not just ACE, so we don't necessarily agree with some of the judgements here, but all review ratings are, to a certain extent, subjective.

SPECTRUM AND ST CHARTS OPPOSITE

HOW TO ENTER

STEP ONE
Find a postcard. Enter you name and address, a daytime telephone number if you have one, and the Round Number.

STEP TWO
Tell us your age and which machine you own. Just in case you win!

STEP THREE
Examine this month's charts. Then, using your knowledge of the games scene, try to predict which games will come top of the six machine specific charts. Finally, enter on your postcard:

- the top game for the Spectrum
- the top game for the C64
- the top game for the CPC's
- the top game for the IBM PC
- the top game for the Amiga
- the top game for the ST

YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENTER A SUGGESTION FOR EVERY MACHINE! But remember that your chances of winning may increase if you do.

STEP FOUR (OPTIONAL)
You can also try to predict which company will be at the top of next month's Stockmarket listing (see this page). Enter on the card:
'**The top softco will be...**(name of company)'

STEP FIVE (OPTIONAL)
If you want to go for the jackpot £150 prize, then select any of the previous categories and try to predict the top FIVE entries for next month instead of just the top one. Then tell us which category you're predicting for – it can be either the Stockmarket or any of the machine categories in Step Three. REMEMBER – YOU CAN ONLY SUBMIT **ONE** JACKPOT CATEGORY!

STEP SIX
Post the card (WITH a stamp!) to us to arrive not later than the closing date for this round (31st November). The address is:
ACE Stockmarket
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU
Dozens have won prizes – perhaps you'll be lucky this time!

THIS IS ROUND 13

Each month's competition has a round number so that we can correctly identiry entries. You MUST include the round number on your postcard otherwise your entry may not be processed correctly.

LATEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED ON PAGE 153!

THE RULES
- All entries must be received by November 31st 1990.
- No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.
- Only one entry per household. Proof of posting not held as proof of delivery.
- We cannot undertake to deliver specific software titles as prizes, but rest assured that we will make every effort to ensure that the games get the adrenalin pumping!

ATARI ST

Cadaver	**Image Works**	**88.5**
Operation Stealth	**Delphine/US Gold**	**87.17**
Rick Dangerous II	**Firebird**	**87.04**
Simulcra	**Micro Style**	**87.02**
Int'l Soccer Challenge	**Micro Style**	**80.38**

Lots of top-notch stuff to choose form on the ST this month, with the Bitmaps' *Cadaver* edging *Operation Stealth* off the top spot.

SPECTRUM

Ivan Ironman Stewart	**Virgin**	**92.5**
Satan	**Dinamic**	**78.5**
Nightbreed	**Ocean**	**78**
Salamander	**Hit Squad**	**75.5**
4x4 Off Rd Racing	**Kixx**	**70**

Here's hoping the overall quality of Spectrum product improves as we get closer to Christmas – makes Virgin's racing game look even better than the reviews

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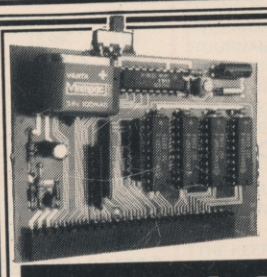

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The ACE Hardware Guide comes in two sections: 16-bit upgrades (this month); and consoles (next month). Please note: we do our best to ensure that all information is correct and update the section regularly, but we cannot be held responsible for any errors.

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Package: keyboard, mouse and drive: keyboard mouse and drive plus monitor (colour or mono);
Memory: 3000 512K; 310 1Mb; 410 1Mb; 420 2Mb; 440 4Mb
Processor: Acorn ARM
RRP: Prices range from £789.97 for A3000 alone to £2644.60 for A440 with colour monitor
Contact: Acorn 0223 245200

IN BRIEF

Still the cutting edge of micro technology. Acorn's ARM is about the fastest thing this side of a Cray. This very exciting machine – although gathering admirers since the introduction of the A3000 – still lacks a good games software base and is best left to the enthusiast.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 320 x 256 or 640 x 256 with normal monitors. 640 x 512 available with multi-sync monitors.
Palette: 4096
Colours: From mono up to 256 (320 x 256) or 16 (640 x 512).
TV: No
Monitor Output: Mono composite video: colour – RGB + sync.
Monitor Supplied: Depends on package bought.
Monitor Options: Acorn dedicated 14 inch medium res. colour; 12 inch high res mono; Multi-sync colour.
Sprites: 1
Speed: Blistering.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Good
MIDI: With extra hardware.
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: 16 channels (8 stereo pairs); 6 octaves, 1 internal speaker.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch – 800K
Disk Price: From £1.20 upwards.
Disk Performance: Good and fast.
Keyboard: 103 keys with programmable auto-repeat. Early keyboards have a cheap feel given the quality of the machine.
Joystick/Mouse: 3 button mouse; n support for joysticks.
Interfaces: 25 pin D parallel; 9 piN mouse; 3.5mm stereo headphone jack; 64 way din; 41612 expansion port; IEC 320 video outlet; I/O interface.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Still very limited. Some games available most software is for productivity and business.
Current Releases: See above.
Games: Most famous are *Zarch (Virus)* and *Conqueror*. But there have been several impressive one-off titles released recently.
Graphics: Potential is enormous. Some excellent packages available
Music: Like graphics, but developers remain shy.
Prospects: Limited. Even the cheaper models find it tough competing with STs and Amigas.
Software Loading: Very reliable.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: Still scarce, some 305 and 310s starting to appear but expect to pay for them.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Return to faulty machines dealer.

APPLE MACINTOSH

Models: SE; SE30; IIcx, IIci
Package: Monitor with built-in CPU and disk drive, separate keyboard
Memory: 1Mb
Processor: SE Motorola 68000; IIcx 68882; IIci Motorola 68030
Recommended Retail Price: SE £2,195 upwards; II £3540 upwards (all ex VAT)
Contact: Apple 081-569-1199

IN BRIEF

A very expensive up-market machine for those keen on ultra user friendly computing. Software is very expensive. Quite a few games in the US, but few over here. Good for MIDI musicians. Watch out, however, for a new budget Mac, believed to be launching in the New Year..

GRAPHICS

Resolution: SE 512 x 342; II 10027 x 760
Palette: SE – black and white; II (with colour monitor) 16 million.
Colours: With colour monitor – 16 to 256
TV: No
Monitor Output: Integral monitor.
Monitor Supplied: Built-in
Monitor Options: SE – use dedicate model only; II Apple hi-res monochrome or AppleColor hi-res RGB.
Sprites: None
Speed: SE reasonably fast; II very fast.SE30 and IIX/CX even faster; IIci blinding

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Good
MIDI: Third party interfaces available.
Stereo Output: SE no; II yes.
Performance: 4 channels give good performance.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch – 800K
Disk Price: £1.50 – £2.00
Disk Performance: Generally fast
Keyboard: Separate with 81 keys including function keys and numeric key pad. Optional extra is the Apple Extended keyboard with 105 keys.
Joystick/Mouse: Joystick is not supported; high-quality single button mouse is supplied with machine.
Interfaces: SE/SE30 – Apple Desktop Bus connector. 2 RS232/RS422 serial; external disk drive; 96 pin Euro-Din expansion slot; SCSI – DB-25 connector; external audio amplifier. II – 2 RS232/RS422 serial; DB-25 SCSI T.

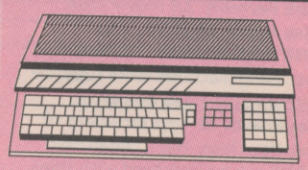
SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: A very wide base exists in all fields except games.
Current Releases: Adequate, though largely of US origin and in the business or DTP field.
Games: Very few arcade titles but plenty of icon driven adventures.
Graphics: Lots of interesting software for those interested in DIY publishing.
Music: Very well supported for MIDI software – but it's expensive to boot.
Prospects: As always, excellent – especially in business and DTP.
Software Loading: Quick and reliable.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Generally the RRP – Macs are only sold through dealerships. Ask for a discount for cash.
Second Hand Availability: Scarce and expensive. A better market exists in older models but these are best avoided.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Apple offers Applecare – "insurance" you take out to cover the cost of repairs after the guarantee has run out.

ATARI ST



Models: Atari 520STFM; 520STE; 1040STE; Mega STs; Stacy
Package: 520 and 1040 have keyboard with built-in disk drive; Mega versions have separate keyboard. Power Pack includes 520STE with light gun, joystick and £400 of "free" software. New "Discovery" pack includes similar value software to Power pack but with an STFM and an educational bent.
Memory: 520STFM and 520STE 512K; 1040STE 1Mb; Mega ST 1, 2 or 4Mb; Stacy 2 or 4Mb. STE machines expand internally to 4Mb.
Processor: Motorola 68000
Recommended Retail Price: 520STE (Power Pack) £399; 520STFM (Discovery Pack) £299; 1040STE £499; Stacy N/A
Contact: Atari 0753 33344

IN BRIEF

Excellent as a general purpose home machine for games, small business and productivity. It's the number one choice for MIDI musicians. The ST's price still gives it a slight edge over the graphically more advanced Amiga. The new baby ST – Stacy – is tipped by Atari to be the musician's portable since it is a complete 2Mb or 4Mb ST with hard disk and mono monitor in a small box.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Low-res 320 x 200;

medium res 640 x 200; high-res 640 x 400
Palette: STFM 512; STE 4096; Stacy 2
Colours: Black and white in high-res; 4 colours in medium-res; 16 in low-res.
TV: Yes. Not Stacy.
Monitor Output: STFM models only, others through TV modulator
Monitor Supplied: No; Stacy has integral LCD monitor
Monitor Options: Atari monitors SM124 high-res mono; SC1442 med res colour.
Sprites: 1
Speed: Fast
***NB** High resolution display is only available on monochrome monitor; medium and low res displays only available on colour monitors or TVs. Blitter fitted to late STFMs (standard on STE) improves the GEM access.*

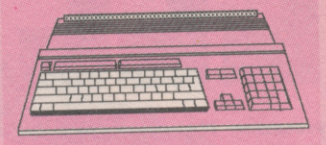
SOUND
Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: Yes
Stereo Output: STE only.
Performance: 3 channel sound is average to good depending on software. STE features 8 bit PCM sound but no current software uses it.

HARDWARE
Disk Format: 3.5 inch – 720K
Disk Price: £1.20 to £1.50
Disk Performance: Reliable and fast. Early machines were supplied with a single-sided disk drive.
Keyboard: 96 keys including 10 functions keys. Has a cheap feel which can be improved with third party spring kits.
Joystick/Mouse: 2 Joystick ports are standard; 2 button mouse is supplied with machine. Stacy is supplied with a trackball.

SOFTWARE
Existing Software Base: Excellent. A few budget titles are starting to appear now.
Current Releases: None of the major software houses ignore the ST so it is well served with plenty of good software.
Games: Across the board.
Graphics: Good with some excellent software to manipulate them.
Music: Excellent. Plenty of sound samplers, editors and MIDI software make this the musician's choice.
Prospects: Very good, but the Amiga is currently the favourite with software houses in the UK and the ST has failed to capture a market in the States.
Software Loading: A hangover from the original machines is the 360K disk format which means few companies bother to supply double-sided disks. This means large games require two or more disks with all the tedious disk swapping this entails.

BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: As RRP. Watch out for the twice yearly bundles.
Second Hand Availability: Very common and quite cheap. STs do not hold their value well – beware very old, single sided machines.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Return to dealer if faulty.

COMMODORE AMIGA



Models: Amiga A500; A2000, A3000
Package: A500 has keyboard and built-in drive with separate PSU; A2000 has separate keyboard with built-in (fan assisted) PSU. Recently released A3000 is a very powerful machine indeed.
Memory: A500 512K; A2000 1M; A3000
Processor: 500/2000 Motorola 68000 A3000 68030 16 or 25Mhz
Recommended Retail Price: A500 £NA; A2000 £1236.25; Batman Pack £399.99; Flight of Fantasy Pack £399.99; Class Of The 90's pack £579.99; A3000 from £2659
Contact: 0628 878888

IN BRIEF
A stunning specification with custom chips to rival almost everything around, the Amiga is the first choice for the most exigent of games players and video professionals. After an initially shaky start the machine continues to sell extremely well and has overtaken the ST in the UK, though the latter machine still has a slightly larger installed base. The A3000 is a top-end workstation substitute; includes Workbench 2, featuring enhanced icons, file handling, and security features plus *Amiga Vision*, a multi-media programming tool. A3000 also comes in three configurations, ranging from a 16Mhz, 40Mbyte hard disk at £2659 to a 25/100 at £3610.

GRAPHICS
Resolution: From 320 x 200 to 640 x 400 (more possible in software)
Palette: 4096
Colours: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 4096
TV: With modulator.
Monitor Output: SCART + composite video in monochrome.
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: C1084 £349.99
Sprites: 16 in hardware + unlimited BOBS from soft/hardware.
Speed: Very fast with good software.

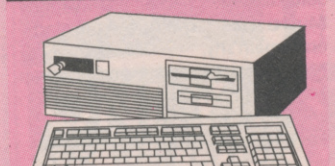
SOUND
Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: No. Third party interfaces available.
Stereo Output: 2 phono connectors.
Performance: Among the best around. Custom hardware squeezes 9 octaves of 8 bit digital sound into the four channels.

HARDWARE
Disk Format: 3.5inch – 837K A3000: 40/100Mbyte hard disk formatted.
Disk Price: £1.20 – £2.00
Disk Performance: Noisy and sluggish. Third party software is available to improve matters.
Keyboard: 94 keys. 10 function keys and separate cursor cluster.
Joystick/Mouse: 2 button mouse supplied as standard.
Interfaces: Two Joystick/mouse; stereo audio; external disk drive(s); RS232 serial; Centronics parallel printer; SCART RGB/video; composite monochrome video; expansion bus (internal on A2000; 32-bit on A3000); clock/memory expansion on A500 only; internal PC expansion on A2000 and A3000.

SOFTWARE
Existing Software Base: Similar to the ST.
Current Releases: Everyone's doing them.
Games: Something for everyone.
Graphics: Quality and range is unsurpassed.
Music: Needs better support for MIDI. Internal sound software is well supported thanks to IFF standards.
Prospects: Excellent.
Software Loading: Noisy but usually reliable. Plagued by viruses.

BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: Old Amiga 1000s can be picked up cheaply enough but these lacked the extra graphics modes of later models. Try to find a good value pack.
Second Hand Availability: Becoming common. Best buys are late Amiga 500s with Kickstart 1.2.
Maintenance: One years guarantee. Return faulty machines to dealers.

IBM PC



Model: IBM's PC was the first PC to be accepted in large quantities (not the first PC) and remains the standard by which all others are judged. There are hundreds of clones and variations including offerings from Amstrad, Atari and Commodore. In general, with PCs you pay for speed and better graphics standards. The extra money is worth it if you can afford it.
Package: Depends on the manufacturer although most are supplied with monitors. They can even be bought in kit form at no extra saving
Memory: Usually 512K or 640K. Can be anything from 64K to 1Mb+. Always go for a 640K model.
Processor: Intel 8088/8086 in base machine is sometimes replaces with the faster NEC V20/30. More expensive machines are based on Intel's much faster 286, 386SX, 386 and even the latest 486.
Recommended Retail Price: Can be picked up for as little as £299 for a "no frills" machine. With top-of-the-range 486 based clones – and the official IBM versions – the sky's the limit. Look for a good EGA or VGA model for between £750 and £1200.

IN BRIEF
Superb value if you want the ultimate all-rounder, the PC still betrays its business origins. Almost every major software house now port their titles to the PC but these remain limited by the constraints of the basic (most common) machines – which means they tend to be limited in sound and graphics. Definitely NOT first choice if entertainment is your preferred use for computers, or if you cannot afford the better EGA or VGA models (which are really essential for good games playing).

GRAPHICS
The first PCs weren't fitted with graphics as standard but most clones incorporate the necessary hardware and come with a monitor. There are three main standards: CGA – a nasty but all to common colour display, EGA about the lowest colour display worth considering, and Hercules monochrome. To get Amiga/ST graphics you must go for at least EGA or VGA which are usually only fitted as standard to more expensive machines (Amstrad's PC2086 is one exception).
Resolution: CGA 320 x 200; EGA 640 x 350; Hercules 720 x 384
Palette: CGA 8 (in two fixed sets); EGA 64
Colours: CGA 4; EGA 16; Hercules 2
Monitor Output: TTL RGB/RGBI (CGA); analogue RGB (EGA)
Monitor Options: Vast. Many monitors are dedicated to just one or two modes – some have amber, green or white monochrome displays – check before buying.
Sprites: None
Speed: From very slow – 8088 to very fast – 80486

SOUND
Speaker Quality: Anything poor from to downright diabolical.
MIDI: Third part interfaces available
Stereo Output: No
Performance: Not the ideal machine for the musically bent – an Atari ST offers more for MIDI, the Amiga more for software sound purists.

HARDWARE
Disk Format: 5.25in –180/360K/1.2Mb; 3.5in 720K/1.44Mb
Disk Price: 60p – £3.00

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Disk Performance: Average. Most PC owners also buy hard disks. A large amount of PC applications software refuses to work unless you have a hard disk.
Keyboard: Almost as many variations as there are clones. Prefer the AT or extended AT layouts to the XT layout since it easier to use.
Joystick/Mouse: Neither supplied as standard. The better clones include a mouse or at least a mouse port, especially since IBM's WIMP system (Windows) has become more popular.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Vast!
Current Releases: All major software houses now produce something for the PC although few bother to support the better graphics modes so even if you have bought a VGA card, you may still have to play with dreadful CGA colours and resolution.
Games: Many of the latest games are now being converted – older titles will not.
Graphics: Given the right graphics adaptor, the PC has nice graphics and the software is usually excellent. On a standard CGA PC the graphics stink no matter how good the software is.
Music: Pathetic. Even the very best PCs can only manage a weak bleep.
Prospects: The PC is the eternal champion – as others fall by the wayside it carries on getting faster and better all the time. This is aided by Intel constantly improving the machine's processor and the vast user base demanding better equipment.
Software Loading: Fast and reliable; very fast from hard disk.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Watch out for package deals form large chains and mail order companies. If you don't know too much about PCs go for a name you know.
Second Hand Availability: Common but be careful you do not get a clapped out monitor/keyboard.
Maintenance: Usually one year's guarantee – but competition has forced the price of maintenance contracts down to an affordable level. This often means they fix the machine in-situ for free.

HARDWARE UPGRADE

Ever thought of buying a Mac? Probably not – because up till now they've been prohibitively expensive, although they are superb machines (and have some good – but pricey and usually monochrome – games). This could change in the New Year if Apple go ahead and release their projected 'budget Mac' in the UK. Costing about the same as a cheap PC, it could be a very serious upgrade consideration for some users, so watch this column if you're interested in budget power computing.

Meanwhile, if you've got an 8-bit machine and want to upgrade, there's really never been a better time to do it than this Christmas. That's because for the first time for several years the hardware scene has really settled down. Current 16-bit technology is unlikely to change for at least five years. Although the leap from 8-bit to 16-bit architecture represents a quantum leap in power, the upgrade from 16-bit to 32-bit is nowhere near as dramatic in processing terms. 32-bit technology, however, would generate significantly higher construction costs, but without a really worthwhile increase in functionality.

For that reason, the ST, the Amiga, and the PC are probably here to stay for some considerable time, so you can choose between them (or the Archie and Apple) without worrying that your machine is suddenly going to become out of date.

Of course, there is one other consideration: consoles. Our view at ACE is very definitely this: consoles undoubtedly offer greater arcade gaming possibilities because their dedicated hardware enables programmers to get more out of the machine. On the other hand, it also tempts lazy programmers to do less. Software prices are high too. However, with the aid of the ACE Console Screentest section and other dedicated magazines you should be able to buy with confidence and avoid the expensive turkeys. And a good game on a console can be a truly great gaming experience. Go on, get a computer AND a console! You know it makes sense!

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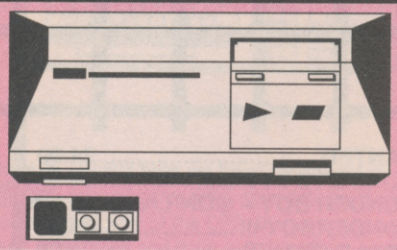
SEGA MASTER



Tecmagik is an exciting new software label created by the International Development Group (IDG) to produce new games on the Sega Master System. The first releases will be Master versions of *Pacmania*, *Populous* and *Shadow of the Beast*. All three titles will be available between March and October next year. IDG was originally established back in 1984 to create marketing and licensing opportunities for American, Far Eastern and European companies. And now for something completely different...

BLACK BELT

BOSS ONE (RYU): Jump over him, face him in mid-air and on landing punch him then quickly kick him. Chase him into the corner then, as he runs back past you, repeat the aforementioned routine.

BOSS TWO (HAWK): Jump his projectile then, as you land, kick him. Keep advancing at him, kicking him whenever possible.

BOSS THREE (GONTA): Make him walk toward you with his hands outstretched. Run into him, punching rapidly. If he jumps at you, back off. Don't get too far away or he'll run at you.

BOSS FOUR (ONI): Stay in the left corner of the screen. When ONI is less than an inch away, kick. He will duck and punch you. As he rises, kick him. Repeat the routine. Don't worry about losing energy, he dies with one energy block left!

BOSS FIVE (RITA): Use the following routine on her... Kick, Punch, Down Punch, Down Kick, Kick, Punch, Down Punch, Down Kick, Fly Kick.

BOSS SIX (WANG): You're on your own here!

• Jojo Cicero and Mark Hook from Wales

SHINOBI

On the title screen, wait for the Ninja face to appear then press down and button two on the control pad. A blank screen will appear for a second, shortly followed by a screen that allows you to start on any stage of any level.

• James Greenland from Bristol

GOLDEN AXE

To add an extra credit (you can only do this once), wait for the GAME OVER message then press the joypad diagonally up and left.

• Daniel Jakubas from Loughborough

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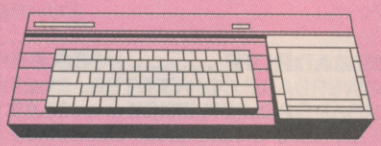
● Rik Haynes

SPECTRUM



"And one by one they fell from grace, with poisoned arrow 'neath their heart. To journey to a distant place where no-one really gave a fart."

The strangest thing to happen in the Spectrum world lately must be absence of the +3 from many large chain-stores at the moment. Indeed, I had a difficult time in obtaining a +3 just a few weeks back and was horrified when independent shops in London and Birmingham told me the machine had been discontinued. Would Amstrad make a decision to halt production on the +3 and bundle all its hopes into the sales of the +2 Christmas pack?

Peter Roback of Amstrad insisted that this was most definitely not the case. "It's true that we'll not be promoting the +3 this Christmas, but I don't know where retailers got the idea that Amstrad had halted production. We are promoting the +2 Bond pack this Christmas but we feel that the +2 promotes the range of Spectrum machines."

He also went on to say that +3's are available and held in stock. He suggested that perhaps independent retailers are not holding much stock of + 3 but insisted that the +3 had always done well through the independents. So, what is exactly happening? Well, the Christmas spend seems to be centered on an advertising budget aimed purely at the +2 double oh, oh, 007 pack which seems to mark a back to cassette only games for we Spectrum owners. Perhaps this news should create a bit of a sales boom in one area at least. All those lucky creatures who sell Multiface 3's and similar tape-to-disk products should be rubbing their hands with glee as they race to the bank.

IT'S WAR!

It's that time of year again when suddenly, all the software houses suddenly leap out of bed, and like an incontinent Ruplestiltskin, suddenly relieve themselves of all the products that they have had slowly working their way through their systems for the whole year. Yes indeed! They've all had the CES exhibition with which to display themselves to the public in a ritual reminiscent of a male peacocks courting ritual. And in a reaction that could very well be equally reminiscent of the female who is being courted, we must ask. "Okay, we've seen the show but what's in it for me?" Well there are a lot of titles out there – all being busily programed even as we speak.

Ocean's hopes for the Yuletide number one slot must rest with their film licence deals – namely *Robocop II* which, if it has the same success as its predecessor, we'll probably see in the top 20 charts for at least a year after release. It only has to be as good as *Robocop I* and Ocean are once again, in the money. Film licence number two will hit our screen in the guise of Ocean's *Total Recall*, it's still being programed at the time of writing. Though Ocean's *Pang* would take top place this year in the Speccy stakes – if products sold on their own merit. I can only say that it's the best graphics I've ever seen on a Spectrum. And I've seen some.

Meanwhile, Mirrorsoft's *Predator II* is currently under the programmers fingers at Arc Developments. The team have been given a fairly free rein with the development of the gameplay, graphics et al and so, it'll be interesting to see whether this added responsibility will produce the best of results. The graphics on Amiga are excellent and due to the amazing quality of the graphics on Ocean's *Pang*, I expect a lot of this package. In fact Mirrorsoft may well have it all their own way this Christmas with their major industry scoop – the *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtle* licence. The full colour graphics on this are good and it seems that Probe, the development house, have done an excellent job. With good gameplay, good, full colour graphics and the Turtle licence, I can't see anyway that Turtles won't take full honors this Christmas.

US Gold has been releasing good quality games regularly throughout the year and Christmas looks to be no exception – but if they can fight through all the big piggy-back marketing of the other biggies, then my friend, they are a man. US Gold have several, including *ESWAT*, *Line of Fire* and *UN Squadron*.

● Garth Sumpter

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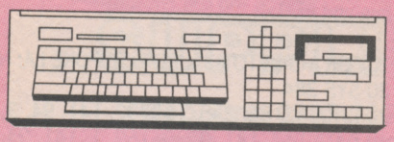

Well what have we here? No sooner do several companies speculate as to the doubtful longevity of the CPC, than a virtual barrage of releases find their way onto the market in glorious CPC format, (yay!).

First off, we have Microstyle's *Rick Dangerous II*, the follow up to the incredibly successful puzzle-based platform original. Sporting reasonably drawn, very colourful graphics and very good quality sound (loads of FX and a different tune for each level), *RD II* packs all the frustration and addictiveness of the original, which just goes to prove that there's life in the old CPC yet.

Secondly, we have several releases from the suddenly prolific Gremlin, who have certainly been a bit quiet on the CPC front of late. Not only have they recently released *Switchblade* on GX4000 format, but they are currently in the throes of putting together both *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge* and the somewhat ambitious conversion of *Shadow Of The Beast* (originally from Psygnosis). All three of these titles look impressive, the common denominator being that each use the Amstrad's four-colour mode as opposed to the lower resolution 16-colour mode. The resulting effect is that the extra resolution allows a very impressive level of detail to be achieved – nice going Gremlin!

News now of a recent departure in the games world. Nemesis, the company behind the classics *Bonzo Blitz*, *Super Meddler* and *Maxidos*, have well and truly kicked the bucket. However, the software will still be made available through suppliers Microstyle (no, nothing to do with the Microprose subsidiary) and the latter product is to be given away with every Microstyle disk drive purchased. All three titles are to appear in software bundles, priced at £13.75 each and since production is to continue, stocks will not be limited. To order or gain more information, contact Microstyle at 212 Dudley Hill Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD2 3DF, or telephone on (0274) 636652.

There's nothing like fluidity in prose, so here it isn't, some assistance for the tape version of the Rainbow Arts blast *Turrican*:

```
10 DATA 06, 00, 11, 70, 01, cd
20 DATA 77, bc, 3a, 85, 01, 67
30 DATA ee, 75, 6f, 22, 80, 02
40 DATA c3, 80, 01, 21, 7e, 00
50 DATA 22, 59, 1b, c3, 00, 1b
60 DATA af, 32, f0, 04, 3e, c3
70 DATA 32, 63, 8f, c3, 00, 03
80 FOR j=0 TO 41: READ a$
90 x=VAL ("&" + a$): y=y+x
100 POKE j+96, x: NEXT j
110 IFy<> 3644 GOTO 130
120 CALL 96
130 PRINT " data error "
```

And a quick tip for those of you having trouble with the first couple of screens of *Knightmare*.... Go to the dripping wall, take the water and give it to the old man. Then take the food and give that to him as well, in return for which he should give you a magic spade. Walk into the second room (open door) and use the spade.

Back on the track for news, I hear that Amstrad have decided to withdraw the Speccy Plus 3 from the market. Now whilst Spectrum owners may feels sad at the loss of this machine, it does bode well for those of us with Amstrad's own, especially those considering buying a 6128+. The reason Amstrad stopped manufacturing the disk-driven spectrum, is because it feels that the machine competes with the new 6128. Granted the speccy may cost half as much as the 6128+ AND have the ability to be plugged into any TV, BUT.... the new Amstrad is technically superior and comes packaged with a monitor. In addition to this, now that the Plus 3 has gone, Amstrad will be able to concentrate their full attention on the new machine. A welcome change of heart from the company, who have at times appeared to let their machines plod along in no particular direction.

And finally, the SX1100 Challenger, this stick boasts a somewhat unusual six button configuration, allowing use by either left or right handed players. (There is even an infra-red version for those who like to wander!) And on that rather deranged note, let's hear it for the CPC!

● **Alex Ruranski**

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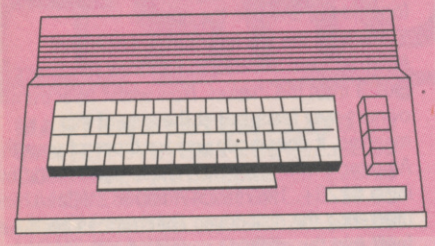
C64



With so many people poo-pooing the survival chances of the 8-bit formats, it's good to hear that the C64 is still going strong. In fact, software houses are reporting that C64 games are outselling those of every other 8-bit machine, including the C64's long-time nemesis, the Sinclair Spectrum!

The C64's likelihood of high sales this Xmas are very good, especially following the announcement of Commodore's £159 bundles, which comprises a C64 computer, C2N cassette deck, two joysticks (a great idea with so many two-player games about) and the all-important games. These are made up of two compilations: Ocean's *Night Moves*, which contains *Shadow Warriors, Secret Agent, Midnight Resistance* and *Nightbreed*, and Domark's *Mindbenders*, which contains *Trivial Pursuits, Snare, Confuzion* and *Split Personalities*. The intention would appear to be to mix arcade thrills with more thoughtful tasks, perhaps to attract parents looking for a more educational aspect to a computer and don't want Junior turning into a video junkie (not that it ever hurt me!).

Commodore has also taken this opportunity to repackage the 1571 disk drive. The price is now down by £50 to £129.99, and this includes the two compilation packs given away with the C64 bundle detailed earlier. Commodore has clamped down on third-party drive manufacturers copying the protected technology used in the disk interface and it has thus seized control of the market.

Of course, if the console is a hit then the future looks even brighter still. The price of the cartridges will apparently be around the £20-25 mark initially (quite steep compared to what C64 owners are used to), but once they start selling in volume this will hopefully drop to about £15, no more than a disk-based game. Incidentally, the game compilation being bundled with the C64GS, which contains *Klax, Fiendish Freddy's Big Top o' Fun, Flimbo's Quest* and *International Soccer*, will be released on its own, along with two joysticks, for the delectation and delight of C64 owners at the very reasonable price of £29.99.

Commodore seems to have a lot of confidence in the C64 being with us, in some form or another (note that statement!), for quite some time. So, shout it loud and shout it proud, "Long live the Commodore 64!".

I recently had a letter from Peter Martin in Liverpool, who wrote in to say how much he liked the new style Pink Pages (I'm pleased that you do!) and whether I had any pokes for the oldy but very much a goldy *Batman -The Caped Crusader*. I certainly have, Peter. To obtain infinite energy for the winged wonder in his clash with the Penguin simply type in the following BASIC routine and RUN it:

```
10 FOR I=348 TO 432: READ A: POKE I,A: NEXT
20 SYS 384
30 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 32, 141, 94, 3, 96
40 DATA 147, 141, 93, 3, 169, 1, 141, 94, 3,
   96
50 DATA 173, 89, 1, 201, 32, 240, 4, 173, 5,
   220
60 DATA 96, 169, 169, 141, 89, 1, 169, 1,
   141, 159, 125, 76, 32, 6
70 DATA 169, 181, 141, 159, 125, 76, 32, 6
```

...but for the ruck with the Joker change line 70 to read the following:

```
70 DATA 169, 181, 141, 210, 126, 76, 32, 6
```

This is the sort of service I'm more than happy to extend to readers of the column. If you're having trouble with a game, be it old or new, just write in and I'll try to do the best I can to get some tips for it into the next issue. Also, remember that if you have any short tips or hints please send them in.

I have to admit that Peter was the ONLY person who wrote into the column this month. Where are you all? I know that you're out there so do write in – about anything, please! I really do need to know what sort of topics you want to see featured in this column. (Why do I have this terrible feeling that I've said this before?)

● **Simon Belvedere**

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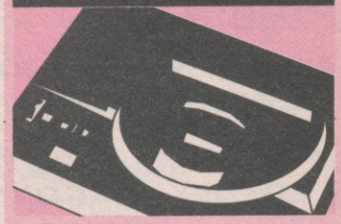

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GOLDEN AXE

On the character select screen, simultaneously hold down B and Lower Left to reveal a round select function.
• James Dobson from Somerset

THUNDERFORCE III

For an option mode, press A and Start together on the title screen.
• James Dobson

SUPER SHINOBI

On the waterfall stage where the logs fall horizontally, move to the end of the ledge – jump, somersault and fire so the knives go downwards. If you hear a 'crack' sound, jump on a log and go down for a Ninja Magic – then jump back onto the ledge!
• James Dobson

BATMAN

When you reach the first extra-life symbol, jump across and get it. Go up to the top half of the moving platforms and go back down. Another extra life has appeared. This can be repeated up to nine lives. It is worth noting that this can be done in other parts of the game with Batarangs, etc.
• James Dobson

PHELIOS

If completing the game in Advance Mode, don't turn the machine off. Restart the game and you can now play in expert mode!
• James Dobson

SPACE HARRIER II

On the title screen press A, B and C to access the music tester. The pieces of music correspond to the levels.
• Jody Goodall from Manchester

SUPER MONACO GP

A passcode for all you boy (or girl) racers: 04C6 E1J0 I507 F000 001S B1D5 3627 B4CF 0Q89 EG00 0183 0002 0000 0000 D200 28DF
• James Starmer from Biggleswade

ALEX KIDD IN MIRACLE WORLD

This is the best way to play scissors, stone and paper...
1st: Stone, Scissors
2nd: Scissors, Scissors
3rd: Stone, Scissors
4th: Paper, Paper
5th: Stone, Stone
6th: Stone, Scissors
• James Starmer

AFTERBURNER II

Hold down A, B and C on the second title screen to play any level.
• James Starmer

HERZOG ZWEI

The passcode LHJKINAFAMA to reach the final level.
• James Starmer

ALTERED BEAST

• Destroy the demon guardian on level one with the A fire button until he starts throwing heads at you. Then, begin to dodge the flying brains by moving left and right while still firing. This monster sprites takes about 50 hits before he goes to the great pixel graveyard in the sky. While the Hell Boar on level five takes 20 shots to kill.
• James Starmer

FINAL BLOW

Press Start to get into the main option screen. Unplug your joypad from port one and plug it into port two. Press start and it will be music to your ears.
• James Starmer

SUPER SHINOBI

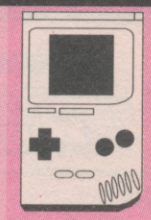
Level One: Select Kariu magic and use it, then somersault and shoot when he is slashing till he explodes.
Level Two: Select Kariu magic and use it. Then, when he is somersaulting, walk next to him, crouch and shoot. Do this until he explodes.
Level Three: Walk forwards to the machine, wait until the laser is above you, then walk back to the left hand side of the screen. Wait until the laser is above you, then walk forward and the brain should be visible, jump and shoot, then somersault and shoot. The brain will now be hidden again. Repeat the cycle described above. After about seven times, select Kariu magic and use it. If the brain is still alive, repeat the whole cycle until it explodes.
Level Four: This is an android, wait until it lifts the scrap metal above its head, then walk towards it and slash. When it has thrown the metal it will charge twice. Jump over his charges and then he will throw another piece of metal.
• Tak On Wong from Harrogate

WHERE ARE YOU BABY?

We need your hints, hi-scores, tips, cheats, comments, views, news and reviews on anything connected with the Mega 16-bit console from Sega and any of its games cartridges. Come on, don't be shy. Send it all into: MEGADRIVE ACE LINES, ACE Magazine, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Alternatively you can fax us on 071 490 1094. What are you waiting for? Get writing now!

● Rik Hay

GAMEBOY



Bullet-Proof Software has done a good job converting *Pipe Dream* onto Nintendo's hand-held baby. This release could even replace *Tetris* as the arcade strategy game to play on the Gameboy. Originally on computer formats, *Pipe Dream* is a very original title with you acting as a hi-tech plumber building a pipe system so that 'ooze' can freely flow. Fast logical thinking, real-time creativity and quick joypad reflexes are just some of the attributes you require to successfully complete the game. Those generous chaps at Entertainment International have 'lent' me a copy of the game – they won't see this one back in a hurry – so you can expect a full review in the next issue of ACE. Talking of issue 40, we'll also be reviewing *Boulderdash*, a classic C64 game now available in beautiful portable monochrome. How does it compare to the original? Find out next month...

ZOIDS

Dale Wilks has sent in his personal review of this £27 cart from Tomy:

"You've played the (rather old) computer game, you've seen the build'em and break'em plastic toys, now Tomy revives the fearsome warrior robots on the Gameboy. Gameboy *Zoids* is not a new version of the old strategy game, but a shoot'em-up based on the zoids. You play the part of the heroic blue zoids in a battle to rid the earth of the evil reds. You begin by choosing which team of three zoids you want to use, although this has absolutely no effect on the game, and is purely aesthetic. You are then shown a picture of the zoid's pilot with attributes like speed, weight, etc. (Although these are all in Japanese.) The game then begins with your zoid walking from left to right, laying waste to the assorted robots which fly, crawl and swim towards you, whilst avoiding lethal boulders, bushes, fire-spitting volcanoes and other obstacles. Extra energy and weapon upgrades can be collected on the way, and each zoid has their own type of super-weapon, which acts as a kind of smart bomb. These are in short supply, but they can also be found scattered around. After completing 3 stages, one of the main red zoids has to be defeated by shooting it several times before progressing to the next level. There are some excellent shoot'em-ups available for the Gameboy – I'm afraid *Zoids* isn't one of them."

HAVE YOU ANY PLAYING TIPS AND CHEATS?

Please send your game tips into us at: GAMEBOY ACE LINES, EMAP IMAGES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Dale Wilks from Cambridge has sent us in a useful tip on this brilliant martial arts arcade game. When one of turtles is low on energy, press Start to pause the game, then press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B and A to give you full energy again. This can only be done once per game.

NEMESIS

Thanks to Mizanur Rahman from Hull for this mega weapon cheat for the classic Konami horiz-scrolling shoot'em-up. Start the game and press Start to pause. Then press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A, B and A. You'll now have all the weapons except speed-ups and 45° directional firing. Have you a sense of deja vu with this tip? It's about time Konami came up with a new method for activating the cheat modes in its games.

SUPER MARIO LAND

Mizanur Rahman has the locations to the secret rooms in this playable platform-romp:

World 1-1: Pipes 3 and 6
World 2-3: Pipe 9
World 2-1: First and last pipes
World 2-2: First and last pipes
World 3-1: First and last pipes
World 3-2: Pipe 7
World 3-3: Pipe 4
World 4-1: Pipes 1 and 34 (before the stack of guns)
World 4-2: Pipes 2 and 12 (use your gun to collect all the gems)

TETRIS

Jody Goodall from Manchester has found a way to put this arcade puzzle game on speed. Press Down and Start at the same time on the title screen for a super fast game. A heart will appear next to the level number to confirm this cheat.

CASTLEVANIA ADVENTURE

Mizanur Rahman has the way to gain the hidden extra lives in this epic game...

Level 1: You need a powered up whip, you can now shoot the token with the fireball and the one-up will fall to the ground.
Level 2: Run and jump across all three moving platforms, while resisting the temptation of using your whip while you're in the air.
Level 3: Wait for the ceiling to fall then hit the tower four times, make sure the last hit is very late. Quickly run back to the torch, jump and whip it to collect the one-up.

● Rik Haynes

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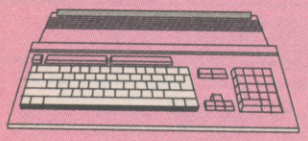

The launch of the CDTV in Spring 1991 is getting ever closer by the minute. However, you may be having reservations about forking out the 700 smackers required to buy yourself this little piece of hardware heaven. After all, the machine may be a marvellous piece of kit, as ACE readers will no doubt be aware, but it wouldn't be the first time that the great British public has decided not to embrace the next best thing since sliced bread.

But have no fear, here comes good ol' Commodore to the rescue. They are currently negotiating with several big High Street television and video outfits to organise CDTV rental, with a monthly fee of £25-30 being suggested. Thus you will be able to give the machine a full testing in the comfort of your own home before having to take the risk of parting with the readies. Well done, Commodore!

And so, on to games. It's very rare in this world to have a sequel turn out better than the original, but Anco managed to pull it off with Kick Off 2. Fans of this fantastic game - surely one of the true computer classics in recent years - will no doubt be pleased to hear that Anco are soon to release Kick Off 2 Extra Time, which should include such features as pitch slope and goalkeeper control. Keep an eye out for it.

Time seems to be going so quickly. 1990 is slowly drawing to a close and all too soon Xmas will be upon us again. Poor old Granny will be trekking through a howling gale to get to the software shop, scanning the shelves for a game to fill little Timmy's stocking. As she casts her rheumy gaze over the bewildering range of brightly packaged titles, she clutches at the £25 in her gnarled hand, a sum culled from many months scrimping and saving small amounts of her meagre pension.

Which should she buy? She doesn't know anything about these computer games, they all look the same to her. And what if she spends all that hard saved money only to find that Timmy already has it. Oh, the dilemma! Then her gaze falls onto a compilation - Timmy's surely not going to have every game in the pack, is he? Oh, the utter joy! Her trembling fingers clutch the box to her chest as she shuffles towards to the cashier...

Yes, once again the software manufacturers are bringing out these bundled packages of titles, and it has to be said that many of them are excellent value for money. Here's a quick overview of four of the most recent:

• Platinum, from US Gold, collects four recent hit Capcom conversions, namely Ghouls 'n Ghosts, Strider, Forgotten Worlds and Black Tiger. All are above average conversions, with Black Tiger the only weak link.

• Hollywood Collection, from Ocean, comprises of Batman, Robocop, Ghostbusters II and Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (action game). Batman is the main star here, with the other three titles being fairly average. Still good value for money, though.

• TNT, from Domark, bundles the Tengen conversions Xybots, Toobin', APB, Dragon Spirit and Hard Drivin'. These are all decent conversions, and the fact that there are five of 'em makes them even better value.

• Wheels of Fire, again from Domark, is made up of Chase HQ, Turbo Outrun, Powerdrift and Hard Drivin'. If you're a racing freak, you can't really go wrong here. Powerdrift is pretty abysmal, but the rest are at least above average.

There you go, now make up your own minds as to which to spend your (or Granny's) money on.

As you may have noticed, Hard Drivin' appears twice in these compilations, and it thus seems appropriate to pass on this handy little tip from Jason Hutchens, who lives all the way round the other side of the world in North Lake, Western Australia. G'day, friend - it's nice to know that ACE is so widely read!

Anyway, on with the tip. To access it all you have to do is select manual transmission, accelerate to the required speed and then press the "N" key. The speedometer will drop to zero, but the car will continue moving at the old speed. You will find that the car won't skid, or slow down if you crash. If you do want to decrease speed, press "1" to go into first gear. Thanks, Jason!

Those of you having trouble with Rainbow Arts' wonderful Turrican (my favourite blast at the moment) will welcome this cheat mode from Brian Rim of Bristol. Type in BLUESMOBIL on the high score table, and - voila! - 99 lives are yours for the using and abusing!

By the way, if you have any other brief tips or cheats, please send them to me at the usual ACE address. However, please note that maps and long game solutions are really TNT's province. That's all for this month - ciao!

Sam Vickers

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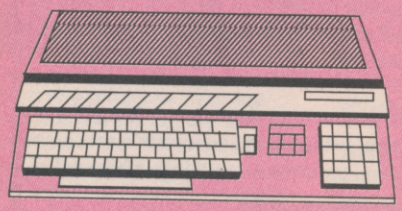


Recent rumours in the computer industry have indicated that the ST may be on its way out within the next year. What foundation these rumours have I shudder to think. However the deluge of software to be released over the Christmas period makes that statement highly ironic and should see the industry eating its own words – with any luck!

Now for the news... Having heard of Atari's intentions to release an ST console – the Panther – what you may NOT have realised is that the company also have plans for a new mid-range ST – the Jaguar – aimed at low-end Desk Top Publishing and business markets. Scheduled for release next spring, the Jaguar looks intended to fill the gap between the £300 ST and £2000 plus TT, currently hardly bridged by the presence of the STE.

When launched, the new machine should retail at about £750 and, correctly presented (something Atari have been notoriously bad at in the past), should help secure the apparently doubtful future of the ST (due to a rekindled Atari market).

Next up, another new ST based machine – the pseudo-portable 'Tracy' from Australian company Austech computers, is designed to be plugged into a monitor or TV "on the move". Internal hardware incorporates an Apple Mac emulator, 286-based PC, 40mb hard-disk and 2 megs of Ram.

Right, enough of the teccy stuff, let's move onto the rather more accessible world of GAMES! (yeah!) This Christmas is looking to present ST owners with a huge range of high-quality software of massive variation. Not only are there the obvious licences such as 'Turtles, Robocop 2, Total Recall, Godfather and Gazza 2, but there will also be more original titles looking to become classics, including Infogrames' Light Corridor, (a 3-D scrolling breakout affair), Botix from Krysalis (an isometric Pong derivative) and the excellent B.A.T from UBI Soft, a role-playing game set in a darkened future, boasting a huge number of locations, superb graphics and an exciting new add-on giving the ST 16-channel sound capability! UBI Soft hope that the cartridge will help combat piracy (working as the kind of widgit previously seen in USG's World Class Leaderboard) and if successful, intend to use its capabilities in the future.

So, there you have it. The doom and gloom predicted by the industry seems to have suffocated under its own enthusiasm. Ah well, the world is a strange and fickle place, full of things that mere mortals are not meant to wot of.

● James Cogan

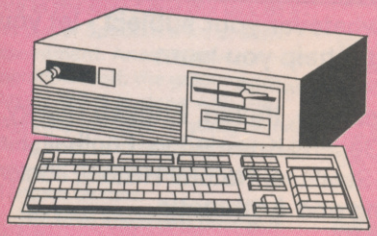
MAC EMULATION +

News that may upset die-hard owners – the announcement of two new gadgets allowing the ST to handle Macware, giving the potential to run powerful DTP software of the kind previously unavailable. The first, (Mac Emulator v.3) includes support for the Mac Laserwriter, the ability to format Mac disks on the ST, compatibility for 68020 and 68030 and using PC disks in Macmode. Such a powerful tool should come in very handy for those of you involved with DTP.

Secondly, the market has recently seen the launch of an internal genlock for the Mega-ST range and an external one for STE's, in addition to an enhanced palette giving 4096 colour capability.

Okay I know I said only 2 gadgets, but here's a third. Forging ahead in the quest to allow the ST to operate fully as a Mac replacement for DTP, an ST version of the hardware AppleTalk emulator (surpisingly named STalk!) has become available, allowing the ST to operate an effective DTP system at less than a quarter of the usual cost.

IBM PC



PC software is far too expensive. That's right, it's far too expensive – but this is partly your own fault. You see, the price of software has always been related to the initial cost of the machine it services... that's why C64 software always cost more than the Spectrum equivalent, and it's also why your games cost a good deal more (up to 15 quid more in some cases) than those that your mate buys for his ST or Amiga.

Okay, that bit's not your fault, but what is your fault is that publishers are reluctant to release `budget' software for the PC like they do for every other machine because so far you've kept what's on offer at a low price at a distance somewhat greater than the length of your arm.

The situation is so ridiculous that Virgin Mastertronic's 16-Blitz budget label actually decided to raise the price of its software in order to make it more attractive. According to the label's product manager Andrew Wright: "PC owners turn up their noses at a game which only costs a fiver, so we've introduced a new range, 16-Blitz Plus, which will feature re-releases of hits at £7.99."

Do you want to read that again? You wouldn't buy it for a fiver so they're now going to charge eight pounds – and it's a good bet that sales will probably increase dramatically.

The most amazing thing is that under these circumstances any of the publishers are bothering to release games at budget prices – but they are, so here's a quick run through of what's come on stream in the last month or so.

One of the larger companies which has only just entered the budget market is Electronic Arts, with its Star Performers range. These are all games which have had a full-price release and are now selling at £9.99. Of the six PC titles available, only three are real stunners – Bard's Tale II, Chuck Yaeger's AFT and Skate Or Die – but that's not a bad strike rate, and picking up those three for the price of one new piece of full-price chart fodder can only be a good thing.

The aforementioned 16 Blitz range also has a new range poised to attack your small change, kicking off with Xenon and Double Dragon: the former (not to be confused with its older brother, Xenon II) was the now infamous Bitmap Brothers' first effort and still provides a good deal of challenging shoot 'em up action – on the subject of Double Dragon however, I think the less that's said the better.

Walsall-based Elite is another of the `majors' which has decided to unleash some of its back catalogue, kicking off with two TV licences, A Question Of Sport and Mike Read's Pop Quiz. Actually these are basically the same game, albeit with different questions – and they're actually a little bit on the expensive side at a tenner apiece – but if you want a little family fun, pick the one whose subject matter most suits your preference and kill some time showing off your amazing wealth of trivial knowledge.

The trouble with budget software though is that it's something of a double-edged sword. If games drop in value too quickly, then it's bound to damage their sales when they originally appear as people won't mind waiting a little while to get them at one third of the price. If however, the low price release is delayed for too long then the games will look so out of date that we'll remain in exactly the same situation as we're in at the moment with games buyers looking down with contempt on anything that costs less than 20 pounds.

Personally, I'm looking forward to the day when Populous, Midwinter and the likes become affordable to every PC gamesplayer – and the rise of a strong market for budget software can only help to bring this day a little closer. So, to do your bit, next time you see a gift horse, try to hold back for just a little while before examining its teeth – who knows, you may even end up with a few classics to add to your collection.

● Ciaran Brennan

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PC ENGINE

Hello! and welcome to a completely new column dedicated to the PCEngine and the Super Grafx. There's still uncertainty about an official launch of the Engine in the UK, but in the meantime an Austrian firm called Digital Image Systems have stepped in and purchased the European manufacturing licence. This means that they will be manufacturing and distributing the European PC Engine until NEC take over – hopefully in the spring.

Digital Image Systems will be releasing the console and all the peripherals, such as joypads, 5 player adaptors, audio+visual booster and most importantly the Compact Disc Rom Player. They will also be releasing all the latest and greatest Engine games complete with English instructions and packaging. All this backed up with a helpline phone number sounds like a winner. The main query is whether the machine will be fully compatible with grey imports. First indications appear to be no but nobody will really know until the machine hits the shops, priced at £160-170 for the machine and the normal price for the games....

CORKING GOOD GAMES !!!

New Engine games at the minute after the summer lull include: Klax which is a pretty good conversion of the arcade game. The gameplay is there but there is a slight difference in the speed and the lack of a two player option is a bit of a disappointment. Another new game is Operation Wolf, the graphics are spot on and that along with the playability involved in going behind enemy lines, and rescuing hostages make this classic game a must for all Engine owners.

The final important release is the follow up to Legendary Axe 2. It features the same storyline,same gameplay and the same type of graphics but in my opinion Legendary Axe 2 has more depth,and thus is better than the original. Finally supplies of Splatterhouse and Formation Soccer are reaching our shores again.Last time around only a few copies managed to reach us, because of a large demand in Japan. Now their manufacturer's have produced a new batch,and so they should be readily available. Both games are equally brilliant,and I wouldn't be surprised if they were snapped up within a week.

Supergrafx....
This amazing 8 bit console has been poorly supported with very little in the line of software. The most recent release was Ghouls+Ghosts. This is the follow up to Ghosts+Goblins which was a huge HIT a few years ago. In this sequel your task is to rescue the Princess Prin Prin from the clutches of Lucifer himself!!! The graphics and sound are spot arcade perfect and believe it or not it plays better than the Megadrive version. Forth coming releases scheduled for a Christmas release are Afterburner 2, and Outrun.

AND FINALLY ...

If the price of Engine games such as the classic Tennis(£32.95) are getting you down, why not buy a second hand copy.Console Quest are one of the leading companies which offer second hand titles for sale. They have a large selection of games ranging from £12.95 for Drunken Master to £25 for a copy of Super Star Solder. They also run an exchange system. The way that works is that if you have finished a game instead of putting it away,use it as part exchange for a completely new game. They also offer a helpful information service and can be contacted on (0903)63786.

TIPS.

If you already own a copy of the best console footy game around at the minute (Formation Soccer) here are the passcodes, and some helpful tactics. The team you play with the passcodes is Holland, and their best formation is 4-3-3. The first tactic to master is how to control the goalkeeper on manual, as the auto keeper doesn't stand a chance on the last few matches. The next tactic you need to master is how to take the ball off the opposing team.

Once you have this mastered you then teach yourself how to master the skills such as heading and volleying the ball. With this skill you will soon be able to head the ball up for another player in the team to take a shoot. The next two skills are very important. They are passing and shooting. The passing is simple when you get the hang of it, and is absolutely necessary if you want to win the Human Cup '90. The way to score goals is to pass the ball around the outside of the box and then when you see an opening run into the box and hit a hard curling shoot to one of the corners. Another method is to take the ball to the outside left of the box, and then cross it in to a teammate.

In the following codes list, the arrows are represented by numbers. Straight up is 1, and then straight up/right (like NNE on the compass) is 2, and so on. 1st: 71251517; 2nd: 71255414; 3rd: 51154512; 4th: 71253452; 5th: 61152554; 6th: 71257555; 7th: 61156457; 8th: 71252471; 9th: 611515173; 10th: 61155478; 11th 71256576; 12th: 61153436; 13th: 71254538; 14th 71258433.

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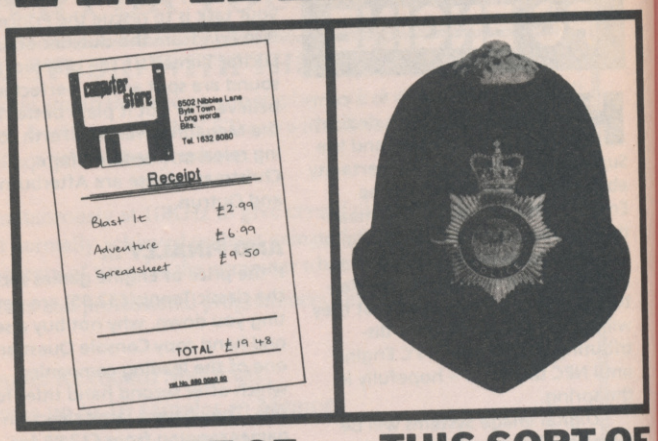

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WINNERS!

HEROES IN A HALF-SHELL

These ten lucky Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle fans have each won £100 worth of Turtle gear and Imageworks products: KEVIN BUCHANAN (Derby), STEVE BILLING (Plymouth), S. KHAN (Ilford), GRAHAM ROSS (London), HIUMAN LEE (W.Yorks), COLIN JACK (Livingston), BEN LARKIN (Shenfield), DAMIAN CASSIDY (Plymouth), JAMES BRIGHTMORE (London) and NIGEL CURL (Coventry).

STOCKWATCH WINNERS

As usual, ACE gives you more - and here are the results of not just Round Ten but Round Eleven as well!

Round Ten saw Core coming out as the top Company, correctly foreseen by Scott Bruce of Cheltenham. Paul Davies of Luton wisely plumped for the timeless classic *Head over Heels* on the Spectrum. Phil Maxfield (yes, I know, again!) wins yet more software by making a good stab at *Murder* on the C64. Come on, Phil, what's your method? *Kick Off 2* in the ST charts was netted by David Pearce of Southampton, and *Corporation* on the Amiga was the correct executive decision by Dominic Veney of Liverpool. Steven Painter of Llywd spotted *Stunt Car Racer* roaring its way to the top of the Amstrad charts and D.Pickup gets a hole in one for *PGA Golf Tour* on the PC.

On to Round Eleven, which was obviously a bit tough - there were only four winners! Nobody guessed the top Company (which was Magnetic Scrolls) or the top games in the Spectrum or PC charts (which were *Time Machine* and *Wonderland*, respectively). However, Jeremy Gardner of Gateshead caught sight of *Salamander* slithering up the C64 charts, while R. Hawkins knew *Supremacy* would live up to its name in the Amiga charts. Anthony Amielle of Glasgow caught *Operation Stealth* sneaking up the ST charts, and Christopher Hageney of Sutton Coldfield correctly saw *Stunt Car Racer* going for its second lap on the Amstrad.

Many congratulations to all the above.

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JOY FAX

Mark Smiddy went to find out what the best buys are in sticks this Christmas...

Enough has been said about user interfaces to sink a decent-sized battleship. But what use is there in judging a user interface if it doesn't include the most important part of all - the control mechanism? And when it comes to games that usually means a joystick. Mice are a different can of high-tech. worms altogether - and there's plenty of juicy tell-tale specifications that can separate good mice from bad ones. But one joystick is much the same as the next one, right?

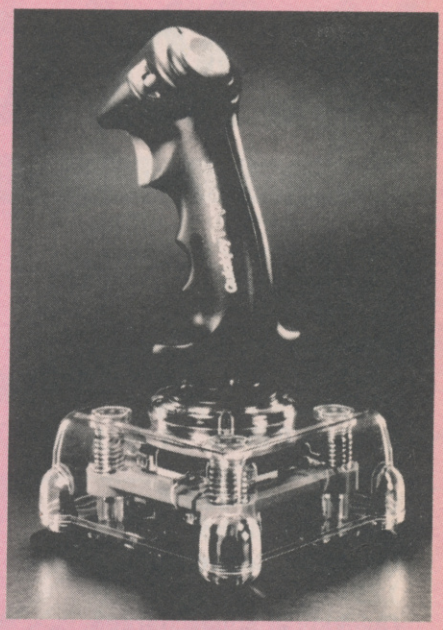
If that were true then this would be a very short article and you could nip off and enjoy the rest of this ACE issue. Joysticks come in all shapes and sizes and as consumers we buy them by the thousand. Some (the Competition Pro, for instance) have become almost legendary among gamers. Curiously, many players get so attached to one sort of 'stick they steadfastly refuse to buy a different type when the old one wears out. That especially applies to the old Atari offering which, although firmly aimed at "budget" bundles, still finds favour with many veterans.

But with Christmas looming ever closer, the manufacturers have something for everyone and what could be a better stocking filler for a favourite grandson than a new 'stick? But as granny meanders into the store and finds herself met by a bewildering selection of styles and a wide variety of prices, how can you influence her decision? For a start it helps if you have some idea of how much her purse will stand – it's no use eyeing the latest top-flight Quickjoys if she can't stretch to more than a tenner.

To help you choose, the table overleaf compares the most important attributes in a joystick – as suggested by a collection of dedicated gamers. But, before you dash off, each one requires some further discussion. In making your choice it's useful to know why. Remembering too, that 'looking good' is not the same as 'playing well'.

Style: this could also be listed under the heading of aesthetics, but it's best kept separate for reasons of clarity. With a few exceptions all joysticks can be placed into 2 distinct categories: those with an "aircraft" grip and those with a good, old-fashioned stick. If you have small hands (or are buying a stick for a youngster) the aircraft grip may prove too clumsy or just plain uncomfortable – they're all made to fit an average hand and as we know so well, Mr Average does not exist. Also, aircraft grips are not very suitable for certain types of games which require a high-degree of 'stick waggling. At the same time, they are ideal for most scrolling shoot-em-ups.

The Megaboard: oodles of controls and even a couple of timers



The Quickjoy Topstar

SWITCHES

Despite what the manufacturers may claim, there are more than just two type of switches. Unfortunately, without opening up every 'stick on test, it was impossible to ascertain exactly which variety applied to each stick. Microswitches are just small switches, so without further guidance (or a gentle prod) a manufacturer can legitimately claim that a cheap "bubble" switch is a microswitch. Bubble switches, however, tend to lack feel, and wear out quickly.

Proper microswitches last a lot longer – but even they come in many styles. They all make a sharp "click" when operated. If the stick makes no sound or a dull thud, its probably based on the cheaper bubble switches. Just to confuse matters, clicking microswitches come in many variations. The best ones are usually sealed – but even they can be confusing. Very few manufacturers will admit to what types they are using. The very best 'sticks use heavy duty switches – but these run expensive.

AUTOFIRE

There are several considerations for autofire. First of all, does the joystick feature an autofire? If it does, can the rate of fire be varied? Can autofire be switched off? Last, does the autofire work correctly on your machine – some autofire joysticks have a "CPC" switch, others don't. Regrettably not all these details were available for all the joysticks listed here at the time of going to press so it's wise to check compatibility before you buy.

ERGONOMICS

This is a fancy word which encompasses a lot of considerations. Actually ergonomics is the study of the relationship between workers and their environment. In this context, it asks precisely how well the designer did their job. That is: does a hand-held joystick sit well in the hand? Are the fire buttons within easy reach? Is the 'stick suitable for a left-hander? Does it have a positive feel? How much force is required to move it?

AESTHETICS

This is another fancy word which doesn't really apply to joysticks. Used by experts, it suggests how good the thing looks. When the bullets start to fly, though, good looks mean about as much as a bent sixpence.

BUILD QUALITY

Is it made to last? This consideration can only be applied to more expensive sticks, the budget ones (under a tenner) are unlikely to take a lot of hammer – but they are cheap to replace. Build quality, like the quality of the microswitches can only be adequately tested by using a joystick until it falls apart – literally! You will only get what you pay for. An expensive joystick with a lot of extra gadgets is unlikely to take the pounding of

THE ACE JOYSTICK BUYERS GUIDE

Name	T	A	R	S	E	V	Fire	Price
Atari standard	B	N	N	U	2	2	1d	3.95
Quickjoy Junior	B	N	N	A	3	3	1u1d	4.95
Quickshot I	B	N	N	A	3	3	1u1d	5.95
Exterminator	B	N	N	A	3	2	1u1d	5.95
Quickjoy Junior stick	B	N	N	F	3	2	1u1d	5.95
Slik Stik	B	N	N	U	3	3	1d	6.95
Quickjoy II Pilot	B	Y	N	A	4	3	2u	6.95
Mega Blaster	L	N	N	U	4	2	2d	6.95
Quickshot QS-128	B	Y	N	P	4	3	2d	7.95
Quickjoy II Turbo	M	Y	N	A	5	4	2u	8.95
Quickshot Controller	B	Y	N	M	3	2	1f	8.95
125+	B	Y	N	A	4	3	2d	8.95
Quickjoy III Supercharger	M	Y	N	A	4	3	2u	9.95
Delta 2000	M	Y	N	U	4	3	1u1d	9.95
Cruiser	M	N	N	U	5	5	2d	9.95
SG Commander	B	Y	V	P	4	4	2d	9.95
Mach I	M	Y	N	A	4	M	2u2d	10.95
Quickshot II Python	B	Y	N	A	5	6	2u	10.95
Quickjoy Jetfighter	M	Y	Y	A	4	5	2u	13.95
Competition Pro	M	N	N	U	4	5	2d	14.95
Star Probe	M	Y	N	A	5	4	2u2d	14.95
Navigator	M	Y	N	F	6	4	1f	14.95
Powerplay Crystal	M	N	N	U	4	4	2d	14.95
Quickjoy SG Fighter	M	Y	N	A	4	5	2u1d	14.95
Zip stick	M	Y	V	U	5	4	2d	15.95
Competition Pro Extra	M	Y	Y	U	6	4	2d	15.95
C. Pro Extra (Glow)	M	Y	Y	U	6	5	2d	17.95
Quickjoy Superboard	M	Y	V	A	5	5	2u4d	17.95
Quickjoy Topstar	M	Y	V	A	#	#	2u	23.95
Quickjoy Megaboard	M	Y	Y	A	#	#	2u2d	24.95
Arcade Power Stick	M	Y	V	U	5	6	3u3d	49.95

one with less features but a similar price.

The key is knowing how to check the quality of a stick without actually breaking it in the process. Bearing in mind also, what has already been explained about price – don't expect too much from a cheap unit. Most upright and aircraft joysticks (with the exception of the Navigator) can be placed on a desk. A good test is to place the unit on a sturdy table and hold it firmly by the base. Now grasp the stick firmly with your other hand and force move from left to right and up and down. Apply firm but gentle pressure – this isn't a test of strength and the shopkeeper is likely to take a dim view of anyone breaking a display model. A good joystick will have a positive feel and should have a pronounced stop after each switch activates. If the base appears to flex or creak, or if the handle appears to move more than a tiny amount this joystick is unlikely to take much heavy hammer.

At the same time, this test allows you to get some feel for the stick and the weight of the movement. Generally it should be firm, but not too heavy for your needs. Games which require a lot of 'stick waggling (sports simulations for example) usually work better with a light stick. Where more precise control is required, a stiffer movement is usually the order of the day. Very stiff movements should be avoided because they tend to wear out the player during a long session. A great example of this is the Cruiser which has a three position weight setting.

Special thanks to Dave and Ibby of CHIPS (0642) 488522 for their assistance.

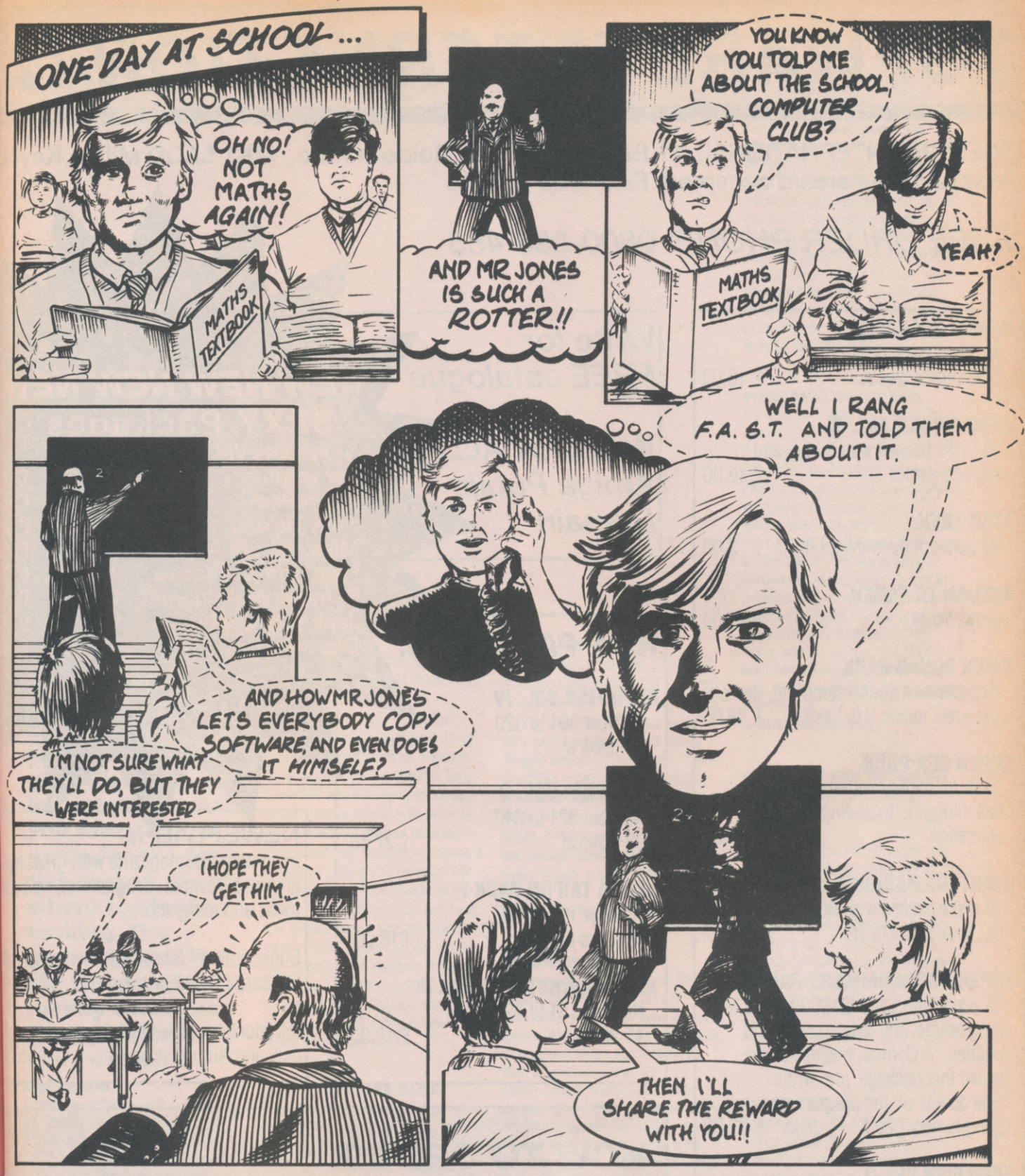
THE ACE SELECTION

Judgements are inevitably subjective to some extent, but here for the record are the sticks our testers went for....

★ ***Best Upright Joystick:*** **Competition Pro Glo**
Runners up: Cruiser + Zip Stick
★ ***Best Aircraft Joystick:*** **Jetfighter**
Runner up: Superboard
★ ***Most Ergonomic Design*****: Navigator**
Runner up: Python
★ ***Best Budget Joystick:*** **Slik Stick**
Runner up: Atari
★ ***Most Aesthetic Joystick:*** **Python**
Runners up: Cruiser + Jetfighter

KEY

T switching method: M=Microswitch; B=Bubble; L=Leaf
A Autofire: Y=yes; N=no
R Autofire rate: Y=yes; N=no; V=variable
S Style: U=upright; A=aircraft (fist grip); P=pad; O=other
E Ergonomics: 1=Poor; 6=Excellent
V Visual appeal (aesthetics): 1=Downright ugly! 6=Beautiful
Fire Fire button layout: #d = number of triggers on base; #u = number of triggers on stick. For example:
1u2d = 1 fire button on stick + 2 on baseplate
2u2d = 2 fire buttons on stick + 2 on baseplate
2u1d = 2 fire buttons on stick + 1 on baseplate



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HOT OFF THE SHELF

***Hot Off The Shelf* pinpoints those games that are on the shelves NOW and are worth your discriminating attention. So if you fancy a new game for the festive season, this is where to start looking. The games in this listing should all be readily available from your software dealer.**

ANTHEADS

Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft • Amiga £14.99dk

For all those who loved *It Came From The Desert* here is more of the same in the shape of a handy bolt-on scenario. It's fifties style Sci-Fi again, and this time some very strange things are happening to the inhabitants of the tiny Mid-West American town of Lizard's Breath. You play 'Brick' Nash, an ex-fighter pilot determined to solve the riddle of the Antheads. If you enjoy puzzle solving with great graphics and sound, then you can't go far wrong with this number, and if you haven't played *It Came From The Desert* then why not give that a try first?

★ **ACE RATING 902**

CAPTIVE

Mindscape • Atari ST/STE £24.99dk • Amiga £24.99dk • PC £29.99dk

Another in the ever expanding number of RPG's portrayed using first-person perspective. Captive, programmed by the veteran Tony Crowther pits you against hordes of rampaging aliens, with nothing but a briefcase at your disposal! This briefcase however, contains a computer giving you remote-control over a four-droid team, with which you must free yourself from the fotress where you are imprisoned. Excellent bitmapped graphics, atmospheric realtime stereo sound and a total of 65000 levels to explore place Captive very much in the ACE rated bracket.

★ **ACE RATING 930**

CHAOS STRIKES BACK

FTL/Mirrorsoft • Atari ST £24.99 • Amiga TBA

The long awaited sequel to *Dungeon Master*. If you have already played through the first program you can use your existing characters, otherwise there is another hall of mirrors you can select from. Chaos has a similar feel to *Dungeon Master*, but is much tougher. There are also some new features thrown in, like a character editor and help oracle (very handy). If you haven't played *Dungeon Master* then play that first before making a definite date with this game.

★ **ACE RATING 945**

CONQUEROR

Rainbow Arts • Atari ST £19.99dk • Amiga £24.99dk • PC £24.99dk

An arcade style tank sim which makes use of a 3D graphics system based around the one David Braben developed for *Zarch*. There are three types of game available: arcade, attrition, and strategy. All three are best played with two joysticks *Battlezone* style, but there are enough control options to suit every set-up. A definite buy for tank buffs.

★ **ACE RATING 925**

CORPORATION

Core Design • Atari ST £24.99dk • Amiga £24.99dk • PC £29.99

This role-playing cybernetic extravaganza from CORE pushes the limits of previous RPG's just that bit further. Corporation is a 3-D exploration, puzzle-orientated arcade combat game (?) in the mould made traditional by the original Dungeon Master RPG. Your objective is to find and remove an embryo belonging to the ultimate biogenetic killing machine, bred by the UCC Corp. Light-source shaded raphics and sound of film-like quality, along with excellent playability and an intuitive control method all contributed in pushing Corporation over the 900 mark.

★ **ACE RATING 945**

DAMOCLES

Novagen • Atari ST £24.95dk • Amiga £24.95dk • PC TBA

This unusual combination of flight sim and adventure game, and sequel to the well-received *Mercenary*, has been in development for a couple of years now, but the resulting game has been worth the wait. The wireframe graphics of the original game have been replaced by solid 3D vector graphics, but they are just as fast. There are now nine planets to explore instead of one city, so there is plenty of long term challenge here.

★ **ACE RATING 935**

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

Microprose • Atari ST £29.99dk • Amiga £29.99dk • PC £39.99dk

A program that could well be described as the Flight Simulator's Flight Simulator. The PC version has enjoyed much success since its launca year ago, and now it's brothers on the ST and Amiga look set to do the same. The sim is based around the much talked about (or perhaps that be whispered about) Stealth Fighter. It boasts four huge sceanrios with hundreds of missions, and plenty of detail. If you are looking for the definitive flight sim, then you can't go far wrong with this one.

★ **ACE RATING 935**

FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER

Mirrorsoft/Spectrum Holobyte • Atari ST £??.?? • Amiga £??.?? • PC £??.??

From the people who brought you the superb *Falcon* comes yet another world beating flight simulation. It is based on the book of the same name by Steven Coonts and has you flying either an Intruder or a Phantom on bombing and reconaissance missions over vietnam. The simulator iery strong on features, including a superb (if a little unrealistic) auto-pilot option.

★ **ACE RATING 910**

FUTURE WARS

Palace • Atari ST £24.99dk • Amiga £24.99dk • PC TBA

A totally mouse-driven graphic adventure from French developers Delphine. You are cast as a mild-mannered office window cleaner who gets caught up in an alien plot to conquer Earth in the 43rd century. The graphics and background music are very striking and the game is made very accessible by the lack of text entry. There is enough of a challenge here to keep most adventurers happy for some time. A delightful game.

★ **ACE RATING 910**

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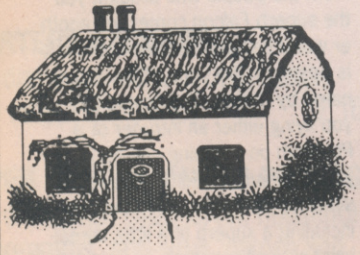

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GRAVITY

Imageworks • Atari ST £24.95dk • Amiga £24.95dk • PC TBA

Deep space strategy unlike anything you've ever seen before. The universe is being invaded by the alien outies who are attempting to turn all the suns in the universe into black holes. Meanwhile you must create as many inhabitable systems as possible. The game makes use of the principle of Einstein-Minkowski fourspace – this makes for some very unusual graphics. When you add programmable drones and travel via black holes you have yourself a highly original and compelling game.

★ ACE RATING 930

HARPOON

Mirrorsoft/PSS • PC £29.99dk

Quite simply the best naval simulation to be released for the General Public. The battleset that comes with the game deals with East-West conflict in the North Sea, but other battlesets will be available soon. A clever system of three map types is used to effectively manage each mission. The nice thing about *Harpoon* is that the computer takes care of all the boring mechanics, allowing you to concentrate on broad tactics. A must buy for anyone interested in modern navel warfare.

★ ACE RATING 940

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Electronic Arts • PC £24.95

The ultimate racing game. *Indy 500* uses state of the art solid vector graphics which really add something to the high speed action. As in Activision's *Bomber* there are a variety of out-of-cockpit views to select from. the realistic handling of the cars will have you coming back to this game time and time again.

★ ACE RATING 935

INTERPHASE

Imageworks • Atari ST £24.99dk • Amiga £24.99dk • PC £24.99dk

Your task is to guide a female saboteur to the heart of the Dreamtrack Corporation by interacting with a strange 3D environment. The game is very weird and very compelling. It is also very hard – don't expect to get through this one in a hurry.

★ ACE RATING 915

KNIGHTS OF LEGEND

Origin/Mindscape • PC £29.99dk

Role Playing at its best. An expandable game set in the land of Ashtelarea. There are twenty-four quests to complete, or you can simply enjoy exploring. The program stands out because of its attention to detail. There are no less than forty different algorithms to decide how and when an enemy retreats for instance. Impressive stuff.

★ ACE RATING 945

LOTUS TURBO ESPRIT

Gremlin • ST £TBA • Amiga £TBA

The latest hot new endorsment from Gremlin in the shape of Lotus Turbo Esprit, is something of a godsend for speed freaks. Hailing back to the classic Pit Stop II, LTE allows head to head action with the use of split screen display. Sound and graphics are of a very high quality and implemented excellently. It's very fast, certainly furious and guaranteed to keep your palms sweaty and your teeth gritted.

★ ACE RATING 875

M1 TANK PLATOON

Microprose • PC £39.95dk

The ultimate tank sim. Not only are there realistic 3D vector graphic sequences with a hell of a lot of atmosphere, but you also have to think carefully about choice of platoons, men, and the way you tackle each scenario. Microprose had to call on the Freedom of Information Act to get all the information that they needed for the game. The result is one of the most frighteningly accurate tank sims we've seen.

★ ACE RATING 926

MIDWINTER

Microprose • Atari ST £29.99dk

The latest mega hit from top programmer Mike Singleton, creator of *Lords of Midnight*. The game is set on a frozen island in the future. Your task is to recruit members of the Peace Force to fight off General Masters' invasion force. This is done by managing people and resources via a series of Fractal Maps and menus. The game has disappointing sound, but nice 3D graphics, and enough solid gameplay to keep you going for months.

★ ACE RATING 948

MYTH

System 3 • C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk • Spectrum £9.99cs £14.99dk

The game that pushes the C64 and Spectrum further than they have ever been before. Fight your way through several time zones to reach the ultimate confrontation with the

god Dameron. The game is captivating not only because of it's size and depth but also because of the superbly animated sprites and sheer playability.
★ ACE RATING 925

OPERATION THUNDERBOLT
Ocean • Atari ST £19.99dk • Amiga £24.99dk • Spectrum £9.99cs • Amstrad £9.99cs • C64 £9.99cs
Eminently successful conversion of the hot coin-op hit *Operation Wolf*. Grab your Uzi and shoot your way through hordes of terrorists to rescue the luckless hostages. There are new 3D scenarios this time to add to the frantic lead spitting of the original. Best played with a light gun, but a mouse will suffice if you don't have one. Joystick or keyboard controls don't really cope however.
★ ACE RATING 927

PANG
Ocean • Amiga £TBA • ST £TBA • PC £TBA • C64/128 £TBA • Spectrum48/128 £TBA
This unlikely mish-mash of space invaders and asteroids makes it to the home computer in all its arcade glory. Bursting bubbles over 50 screens around 17 countries throughout the World, provides for addictive, compelling arcade fun. Excellent quality graphics and sound, and slick presentation make PANG indistinguishable from its arcade counterpart. Go on... burst a bubble!
★ ACE RATING 840

PGA TOUR GOLF
Electronic Arts • PC £24.99
Well, what can I say? For anyone who's never set eyes on a golf sim, this is one. Four accurately modelled courses and a wealth of options provide for a comprehensive and playable game. Each course is has been designed for the proffesional player, so fortunately there's a driving range to allow you to practice that swing. Features such as course maps, percentage range indicators and a 3-D display of the green showing every pit and ridge all contribute in pushing PGA GOLF into the ACE Rated category.
★ ACE RATING 910

PIPEMANIA
Entertainment International • Atari ST £19.95dk • Amiga £19.95dk • Spectrum £9.99cs £14.95dk • C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk • Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk • PC £19.95dk • Macintosh £24.95dk • Archimedes £24.95dk • MSX £9.95cs £14.95dk • BBC/Electron £9.95cs £14.95dk
The game that proves plumbing can be fun. You must construct a continuous length of pipe from several sections before the flooz escapes. The action is just as compelling as that in games like *Tetris* and will have you burning the midnight oil in an attempt to beat the odds. It is available for practically every machine, so there is no excuse for not owning a copy.
★ ACE RATING 910

PLAYER MANAGER
Anco • Atari ST £19.95dk • Amiga £19.95dk • Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk • C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk • Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk
Kick Off with a management/strategy element. The game is completely icon driven, making it easy to get into. The management detail is superb, right down to planning in-match tactics. And for the match you can either watch from the sidelines or join in with the *Kick Off* style fun.
★ ACE RATING 920

ACE CLASSICS!

All the games in HOT OFF THE SHELF – this month's software selection – have been released in recent months and should be readily available from your local dealer or by mail-order. We've chosen the titles carefully to ensure that, if one should take your fancy, it ought to be readily available. Don't forget that most dealers will be happy to order titles for you if they haven't got them in stock.

However, the truly discerning player knows full well that some of the greatest games of all time are not generally available in the shops. ACE is compiling a listing of History's Greatest Games – but we've hit a few snags. Our main problem has been that software houses tend not to keep records on their older games and we have still a lot of detective work to do to locate stocks (if they exist) of older titles. However, we do hope to have the listing ready for the New Year – our apologies for the delay.

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One of the best tennis games yet. The control method works really well, although the standard of the computer players is good, so you'll have to put in a lot of practice. There is a choice of grass, concrete, clay, and indoor courts, as well as comprehensive practice options. A good way of spending a few hours while you are waiting for Wimbledon.
★ **ACE RATING 900**

THEIR FINEST HOUR: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN
Lucasfilm • Atari ST £24.99dk • Amiga £24.99dk • PC £24.99dk
World War II air combat relived in this superlative flight sim. You have the opportunity to fly a variety of WWII craft from the Spitfire to the Hurricane. A neat option is the camera which records your flight and can be replayed to assess your performance.
★ **ACE RATING 933**

ULTIMA VI
Origin/Mindscape • Atari ST TBA • Amiga TBA • PC £34.99dk • C64 TBA
The ultimate rôle playing game. Sixteen thousand objects, two hundred and fifty characters, unlimited encounters, a quest that will take months to solve, and graphics better than you'll see on any other game of this type. The Ultima series of RPGs go from strength to strength. Join forces with Lord British and once more enter the fray... unbeatable stuff!
★ **ACE RATING 950**

VENDETTA
System 3 ●C64 £9.99cs £12.99dk
A great arcade adventure that really pushes the C64 to its limits. You must fight your way past the terrorists to defuse a bomb, and rescue the professor and his daughter. But while you are on the terrorist's tails the police are on yours. Most of the action takes place against an isometric 3D background, but there is also an excellent driving section to rival many full-scale driving games.
★ **ACE RATING 912**

VETTE
Mirrorsoft/Spectrum Holobyte • Atari ST TBA • Amiga TBA • PC £29.99
High speed racing round the streets of San Francisco in one of four Corvettes on offer. The superb 3D colour graphics in the game give a great sense of the wind in your hair as you roar down precariously steep streets desperately trying to avoid pedestrians and other vehicles. Realistic and lots of fun, this game, from the people who brought you Falcon, will have you hooked.
★ **ACE RATING 926**

WARHEAD
Activision • Atari ST £24.99dk • Amiga £24.99dk
Veteran programmer Glynn Williams' latest masterpiece is set in deep space. Earth is under threat from a horde of nasty extra-terrestrial insects. The only hope is the FOE-57, an advanced craft absolutely loaded down with weaponry. Fast solid vector graphics and rapid action make this a winner. Work your way up through the training missions and you'll soon be zapping away quite happily.
★ **ACE RATING 920**

WELLTRIS
Infogrames • Atari ST £24.99dk • Amiga £24.99dk • PC £24.99dk
Effectively the follow-up to the resoundingly successful Tetris, Welltris takes the original idea and literally turns it on its head. Seen from a plan-view, Welltris requires you to rotate coloured shapes that fall down the walls, fitting them together to make a horizontal or vertical unbroken line. This achieved, the line disappears to make way for another. Sound familiar? Despite the obvious connection, Welltris looks good and plays well and is worthy of anyone's collection.
★ **ACE RATING 901**

WHEELS OF FIRE
Domark Amiga £29.99 • Atari ST £24.99dk • C64/128 £14.99c / £24.99dk • Amstrad £14.99 c / £24.99dk • Spectrum (+3) £24.99dk / (48/128) £14.99c
Hard Drivin' disappears from the classics column to reappear on this Domark compilation, which also sports three other successful driving games. Namely, Chase HQ, Turbo Out Run and Power Drift. The answer to every boy-racer's dream, each title shows its own individuality and has done well in its own right. And just in time for Christmas too!
★ **ACE RATING 901**

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ACE DIARY

NOVEMBER

11 - 17 NOVEMBER SOFTWARE RELEASES

Accolade: *Star Control* (Amiga £24.99)

Software Business: *Fool's Errand* (ST, Amiga £24.95). Adventure/puzzle game.

***Millennium Warriors* (C64 £9.95 tape, £14.95 disk).**

***Security Alert* (C64 £9.95 tape, £14.95 disk). Strategy and action from US software house First Star.**

Thalion: *Enchanted Land* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Multi-scrolling run'n'jump platform game.

Origin: *Wing Commander.* Origin's first flying game, like a next generation Starglider.

Software Toolworks: *Games People Play* (PC, £29.99). Follow up to Gin and Cribbage featuring backgammon, draughts, plus gin rummy and cribbage from the previous program.

Image Works: *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* (Spectrum, ST, CPC). Need we say more?

US Gold: *Strider II*, No Limits, No Mercy (PC). Capcom endorsed, Strider follow-up though not based on a specific coin-op.

***Limited Edition - Dual Pack: Zak McKracken plus Indiana Jones/Last Crusade - the Graphic Adventure* (ST, Amiga, PC £29.99). Double pack featuring these two Lucasfilm games. Free cluebooks thrown in as well.**

Micro Style: *Rat Pack* (PC £29.99)

Microprose: *Knights of the Sky*

Ubi Soft: *Pick'n'Pile* (Amiga, PC £29.99). Puzzle game: match the balls and clear the screen.

***Super Puffy's Saga* (PC £24.99).**

***Ranx* (PC £24.99). Arcade game featuring French cartoon hero.**

Sunday 11
Remembrance Sunday. Stevenage, Britain's first "new town", was thus designated on this day in 1946.
Monday 12
Veteran's Day, USA
Tuesday 13
Wednesday 14
Birthday of Charles, Prince of Wales, 1948. The first British record singles charts were published in New Musical Express on this day in 1952. First British number one was *Here in my Heart* by Al Martino.
Thursday 15
Friday 16
Saturday 17

18 - 24 NOVEMBER SOFTWARE RELEASES

Ocean: *Special Criminal Investigation (Chase HQ 2)* (Spectrum £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk; C64, CPC cartridge; ST, Amiga £24.99). Police the highways from Paris to the Sahara.

***NARC* (Spectrum, C64, CPC £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk; ST, Amiga £24.99). Coin-op conversion with you on a drug-bust in the twilight areas of the city.**

***Epic* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Intergalactic shoot 'em up from the *F29 Retaliator* programming team.**

Innerprise: *Aviators (Battle Squadron II)* (Amiga £24.95). All out shoot 'em up.

Kingsoft: *Hagar the Horrible* (C64 £9.95; ST, Amiga, PC £24.95). Nordic arcade action.

***Sky Cabbie* (C64 £9.95; ST, Amiga, PC £24.95).**

***Emerald Twins* (C64 £9.95; ST, Amiga, PC £24.95). Puzzle game set in series of mazes.**

Sunday 18
Monday 19
Brazilian footballer Pele scored his 1,000th goal on this day in 1969.
Tuesday 20
Wednesday 21
Thursday 22
Thanksgiving Day, USA. Independence Day, Lebanon. Birthday of Boris Becker, 1967
Friday 23
Anniversary of the first broadcast of Dr Who, in 1963.
Saturday 24
Birthday of Ian Botham, 1955.

25 NOV - 1 DEC SOFTWARE RELEASES

Domark: *STUN Runner* (Spectrum £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk; ST, Amiga £24.99; PC £29.99). Race through a series of twisting tunnels in this Tengen coin-op conversion.

***Badlands* (Spectrum £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk; ST, Amiga £24.99; PC £29.99). Two player racing game in *Super Sprint* style, programmed by Teque.**

Virgin: *Golden Axe* (Spectrum, C64, CPC £10.99 tape, £14.99 disk; ST, Amiga £24.99). Swashbuckling Sega coin-op conversion featuring mighty warriors, dragons and magic potions.

***Supremacy* (PC £34.99). Vast intergalactic strategy wargame, requiring finely honed tactics and a wide range of gameplay skills.**

Psygnosis: *Killing Game Show* (ST £24.99).

Ubi Soft: *Challenger's Compilation* (C64, Spectrum £14.99, ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99). ST, Amiga and C64 versions comprise *Pro Tennis Tour, Fighter Bomber, Stunt Car Racer, Super Ski* and *Kick Off*; PC version doesn't have *Kick Off*; Spectrum version has *Bomber* and *Tennis*, plus *P47 Thunderbolt, Carrier Command* and *Rick Dangerous*.

***Twin World* (PC £24.99).**

Sunday 25
Goalkeeper Peter Shilton, England's most capped player, won the first of his international honours on this day in 1970.
Monday 26
Tuesday 27
Wednesday 28
Thursday 29
Republic Day, Yugoslavia
Friday 30
St Andrew's Day - patron saint of Scotland

DECEMBER

Saturday 1

2 - 8 DECEMBER SOFTWARE RELEASES

Ubi Soft: *Full Blast Compilation* (Spectrum, C64 £14.99, ST, Amiga, PC £29.99). *Ferrari Formula One, Carrier Command, Rick Dangerous, P47 Thunderbolt, Highway Patrol* and *Chicago 90* on 16-bits; the same minus *Highway Patrol* and *Chicago 90*, but plus *Grand Prix 500* on 8-bits.

Ocean: *Robocop 2* (Spectrum £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk; C64, CPC cartridge [price]; ST, Amiga £24.99). Return of the tin policeman in a game that promises to be every bit as blockbusting as its predecessor.

***Puzznic* (Spectrum, C64, CPC £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk). Eliminate colour/symbol coded blocks from the screen - another of those infuriating puzzle games.**

Accolade: *Stratego* (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99). Computer version of the militaristic board game.

Hewson: *Rubicon* (C64, ST, Amiga £24.99). Defeat the radioactive mutants.

***Moonfall* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Survival on alien planet.**

***Nebulus II* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Innovative platform game returns in a welcome sequel.**

Ocean: *Toki* (Spectrum £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk; C64, CPC cartridge; ST, Amiga £24.99). Arcade licence with fantasy scenario.

***Pang* (C64, CPC cartridge £24.99). Cutie arcade game in *Rainbow Islands, NZ Story* style.**

Micro Illusions: *Firepower* (C64 £9.95 tape, £14.95 disk). Two player tank game.

Micro Style: *Rat Pack* (ST, Amiga £24.99, Spectrum, C64 £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk, CPC £14.99 tape, £19.99 disk)

Sunday 2
Advent Sunday
Monday 3
Tuesday 4
Wednesday 5
National Day (the King's Birthday), Thailand
Thursday 6
Independence Day, Finland
Friday 7
Anniversary of the assault on Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, in 1941, which brought the USA into World War II.
Saturday 8

SHOPWATCH

It has been called 'the most eagerly awaited electrical appliance since the colour television'. It boasts NAQ (er, Near Arcade Quality) graphics which, when implemented correctly, are capable of inducing jaw dropping in even the most jaded observer. It loads all software instantly and reliably, ending the tedious procedure of disk access and swapping. It is half the size and price of an Amiga and potentially more powerful. And, amazingly, it's as readily available as The Satanic Verses in a Tehran bookshop.

The official (forget the 'grey imported versions – think long-term) Sega Megadrive has been 'available' for about three weeks, at the time of writing. In that time we have been able to obtain eight machines and yet we could have sold ten times that amount. If our experience is typical (and it appears to be) then Virgin have what could be the biggest selling machine this Christmas on their hands – if they could get enough of them into the shops in time.

So where are they?

The answer, amazingly, seems to be that Virgin/Sega are 'not too concerned' with selling the Megadrive this Christmas. They want it to be NEXT year's Big Thing. This year they would prefer to shift large amounts of Master systems and, obviously, the associated software.

I am not alone in thinking that this scenario could seriously backfire. If little Jimmy wants a Megadrive then little Jimmy wants a Megadrive! virgin are being (appropriately) naive if they think he will settle for anything less or wait until 'sometime next year'. If little Jimmy's mother can't get her hands on an official Megadrive then she will buy an unofficial one. Which is bad news for everybody concerned (except for the person selling the machine). Incidentally, a 'grey' machine is not grey in colour (as some people seem to think), it can be identified by having a purple, as opposed to silver, plate surrounding the power LED.

So what can be done? Well, if it's not too late, if Virgin NEEDED to obtain fresh stocks, they could, within a matter of days rather than weeks. So if you want a Megadrive this Christmas, it is vital that you let Virgin know how you feel.

And just in case anybody reading this is thinking 'What's the problem, I'll just buy a Japanese imported model', then let me correct you. The initial batch of games WILL run (because they are basically just the Japanese games re-packaged) but forthcoming titles most certainly will NOT run correctly. If anyone, retailer or otherwise, tells you differently then treat their words with extreme scepticism. If you want to own a machine which has as much software support as a 16K Spectrum then go ahead, buy an import. You have been warned!

At this time of year many people are considering buying computers/consoles etc either for themselves or as presents. Some people know exactly what they want, while others go shopping only with the concept of buying 'something to help with the children's education'. This latter group are prime targets for some of the less scrupulous members of the retail trade. It is poignantly amusing to have customers come into the shop after Christmas and ask to see our selection of Atari XE education and business software. When we politely inform them that the sum total of such a range would fail to fill a cricket's condom, they immediately transform into 'irate mode'..."But the man in Dickheads said you stocked it!". My advice: go to a shop that's a member of the National Association of Specialist Computer Retailers (identified by a NASCR on the door). And spare a thought for us retailers, besieged at New Year by tearful Jimmies returning their adolescent amphibian games and wailing: "but I thought it was going to be the coin-op, not the crappy Nintendo version".

Whoops! has the feline escaped?!

● Dirk Longhorn

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NOW HEAR THIS!

Last month I asked for contributions for these pages - I'm still looking. Particularly welcome are short, self-contained hints and single problem solutions like those from Gavin Manning and Paul Hardy below. I'm also interested to hear of PD and Shareware programs - the best will be reviewed (space permitting). So get in touch!

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 1

Beginning a solution by Augustus De Silva

When at Lefties, enter the bar (notice how stubbly you look compared to LSL2). Sit at the empty seat and order a beer. Don't order champagne as Larry will get himself drunk. Now order a whiskey and head for the jukebox. Insert the dime and it will play your favourite tune. Go to the toilet and pick up the rose. Give the whiskey to the drunk who will give you a remote control. Then enter the toilet and read the graffiti. You will find that one reads a password called "Ken sent me". Now look in the sink to find a ring. Pick it up.

Leave Leftie's and call a cab. (Don't enter the alleyway or you will be beaten up). When the driver asks "Where to Mister?", say "Shop". Go into the Quickie Mart and buy a 'lubber' (condom). After he asks what kind and embarrasses you, pay him and leave the shop. If you don't pay, he'll blow you apart with his double barrel rifle.

Get a cab back to Leftie's . Knock on the cushioned door and say the password to the pimp. Now use the control on the TV and keep switching channels until the pimp sits down and watches. Now head for the stairs and take off your clothes. Look at the prostitute and put on the condom, this bit is censored, but afterwards you are no longer a virgin. Pick up the candy and climb out of the window. Fall into the bin and pick up Leftie's hammer. Peel off the condom or the police will arrest you.

Call a cab and go to the casino. Wander about outside until a man with a barrel appears. Buy an apple from the man. Enter the casino and play on the black jack table, saving your game every time you win. Give up when you have broken the bank. Go to the hotel at the back of the casino where the lifts are. Get the disco pass from the ashtray. If you want some fun, visit the can-can dancers at the side, then leave the casino and summon a cab. Go to the disco and show the disco pass to the bouncer then enter the disco.

ZAK MCKRACKEN

Our solution continues from Mike Bareham

While falling, use the parachute and when you land in the water use the kazoo. A dolphin will now appear. Use the blue crystal on the dolphin and you will then have control over it. Swim underwater then to the right to the largest piece of seaweed covering a lump of fallen stone. Pick up the seaweed and you should now see a glowing device. Get the device, return to the surface and give it to Zak.

Change control back to Zak then wait around until an alien comes along and takes you away to the secret room where he will put you into the mindbending machine. You will now have lost your mind, but don't worry as it will soon come back to you. When you come to you will be standing outside the phone company shop. Walk to the left then up the stairs to your bedroom. Use the monkey wrench on the loose boards and the rope in the hole. Walk to the rope and you are now in the Alien's secret room.

Walk to the left to the cabinet and open it. You have now got back all that the aliens took from you. Walk back up the rope and out of the house. Make your way to Lou's loan shop. Buy a lotto ticket and write down the number you got from the alien ship. Now go back outside and switch to Leslie.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2

The start of a new solution from Augustus De Silva

Once the fancy LSL tune is over and you are left in control of the jerk himself, walk into the garage until you are no longer seen, then pick up the dollar stuffed in Eve's pocket. (Eve is now LSL's ex- girlfriend). Then with only a dollar you must spend it on a "Luck-o-Buck" ticket at the Quickie Mart. Always remember to save your game every now and then.

Walk to the studio and give a ticket to the woman. She will have lost her glasses and will give you the winning numbers. Write them down and give them to her and you will have won. Once in the green room, sit down and wait until you are on the Dating Connection show, then sit down and wait until you are invited to spin the wheel. You will win a million dollar note.

ADVENTURE CONFERENCE?

Read about the ACE Conference in Intermediates' magazine? If you'd like to come along, check out the Conferences section next month.

CORPORATION

Hints from Paul Hardy

Take at least one time bomb with you into the NCC building and use it to blow up the walls of the cell if you are imprisoned. Place the bomb in one corner after setting it then retreat to the farthest corner. Stock cameras and detectors as soon as possible, but if the alarms do go off, run like hell; the further from the scene you get the better. The key to using the powers of the mind lies in the head of the left hand picture of the body, above the 'damage' rating.

HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

An answer to one of the most common queries: how to get the Babel fish. Thanks to Gavin Manning.

First take both the satchel and the towel. Then hang your gown on the hook (after removing it). Next cover the drain with the towel and cover the panel with the satchel. Put the junk mail on top of the satchel and press the dispenser button. A Babel fish shoots out, goes down the sleeve of the gown and hits the towel. A cleaning robot then comes out and picks up the fish. It then hits the satchel sending the junk mail and fish into the air. An upper-half-of-the-room-cleaning- robot comes out, collects only the junk mail (as it can't manage any more) and the Babel fish lands in your ear with a loud "squish".

...and how to enter the engine room The game says that this is a very dangerous room and you will die if you enter it. That is not true, but it is very obstinate. Simply be as obstinate about getting in there and you will - eventually. Then it says there is nothing in the room but it is lying again. Keep looking and examine the room and something will become visible.

CORRUPTION

The solution completed by Alexis Kofteros

After collecting your things from the pavement, go to David's office and remove the television. Wear the stethoscope and listen to the safe with it. Unlock the safe and get the chips. Go to La Monaco and show the chips to the waiter. He will lead you outside the casino - knock on the door to get in. Give the chips to the teller who will then ask you to bring him a document. Wait in the casino until 4 O'clock then go to Mr Hughes' office. Use your credit card to unlock the door.

Enter the office, smash the drawer, and get the document. Read it and then go to the police. Tell Russell about the document. Once in the interview room, give the envelope to Goddard, ensuring that it contains the cheque. Tell Goddard about your BMW then give him the document. He will ask you to cooperate with him - you must accept. Go to Le Monaco and show chips to the waiter. Enter the casino and give the document to Charpontieur. Don't panic! The police will break in to save you. The only thing you have to do is sit comfortably on your chair and enjoy the end!

INFOLINES

Lots of people have asked me about adventure creators for the Amiga so I was pleased to hear of "Hatrack II" from Heyley Software. Features are said to include a built -in multiple sentence parser handling verbs, nouns, adjectives and prepositions, a mouse-driven graphical compass/control panel designer and total control over screen layout and colour. A play-test feature is that you can use menu interrupts to examine and alter the state of play, so cutting down development time. The price is £29.95 and more details are available from Heyley Software, 27 Winnington Road, Marple, Stockport, SK6 6PD.

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ACE CROSSWORD

Our monthly prize word puzzler, set by the inimitable MIPS

Despite complaints from a small minority of readers, the ACE Crossword seems to be growing in popularity every month. Make sure you get your entry in before this month's deadline!

PUZZLE PRIZES

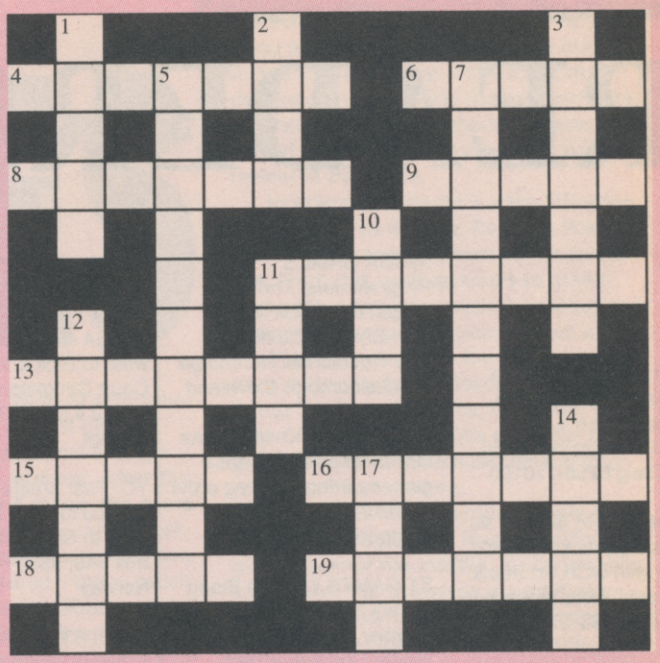
Until recently, we've been offering £25 cash prizes to winners of the ACE puzzle and crossword, but several people have been asking us for games instead. From now on all prizes will be in software, so please make sure you include your name, address, and machine format when you enter.

CLUES ACROSS

4 Teenage mutants let rust develop (7)
6 Colour to be seen in RAM development (5)
8 Prisoner of game from Mindscape (7)
9 Admission of sentry losing his head (5)
11 Game for lad attached to push-chair (8)
13 New development, i.e. Zen, for computer game (8)
15 Devil of a diisguise for Santa from 12 down (5)
16 Award he gets for developing Activision game (7)
18 Does away with skill say some (5)
19 Gone, so I play the game (7)

CLUES DOWN

1 Alan's crystals (5)
2 Fuel some of the wilder viruses (4)
3 Game from 4th Dimension that's very non-constructive (7)
5 Game in which nothing is forgotten? (5,6)
7 Virgin's flying circus (5,6)
10 Gore spilt in game from Origin Systems (4)
11 Give computer a kick to load program? (4)
12 Manic, I'd foolishly formed a software house (7)
14 Some reveal a serviceable type of printer (5)
17 So Ma returns with game oriented language (4)



ATTENTION!

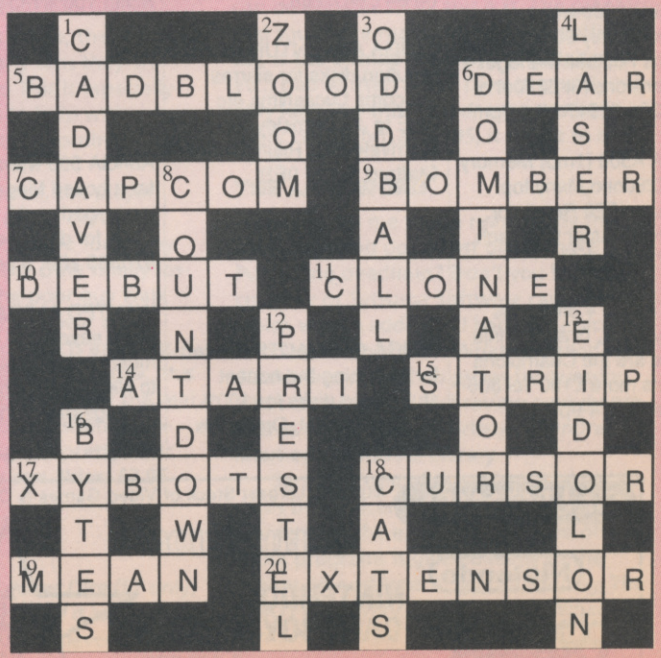
Have you won a prize for either the ACE Puzzle or the ACE Crossword which you have not received? If you're one of these unlucky souls, give us a ring and we'll sort you out straightaway. Remember that we can no longer guarantee individual choices of games to prizewinners, but we'll make sure the games get the juices flowing.

HOW TO ENTER

Every month we offer a free game worth up to £25 if you're the sender of the first correct crossword solution out of the hat. The address for entries is:
ACE December 90 Crossword,
Pink Box
Priory Court
Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU
The deadline is Thursday 6th December 1990. Entries not addressed as above may not be entered into the competition!

SOLUTION TO NOVEMBER 90 CROSSWORD

And the winner was Tony Martin of Peterborough, who receives a a free game for his Amiga 500.



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OTHER

MAKE Money Quick for free info send SAE to Jason Allen Marybelle 2B Wexford Rd., Oxton Birkenhead, Merseyside. L43 9TD

AMIGA PD Newsletter with coverside send £1 made payable to: Mathew Scott 4 Smythsons Close, School Aycliffe, Co Durham.

HELPLINE

ATARI ST Artists unite! Send samples of your work for inclusion in non profit now trade disk magazine. Send blank disk for issue 2 All work acknowledged Steve, 1 Beachfield House Mount Vernon, Thurso KW14 8QW

HELP I need to find a good AMIGA GFX artist and Coder I am a musician who wants to form a demo crew and produce some cool demos. Don't let your hard work go to waste, let people all over the world see what you can do 100% reply Contact MATRIX at 1 Louise Croft, Druids Heaths, Birminham B14 5NY Write today!

HATFIELD A1 BBS Offers Help and advice on all aspects of STOS programming Tel: 0707-270540 24hrs All Speeds up to 2400

I AM DESPERATELY looking for Special 128K versions of Moonstrike, Music composer, Dragonia, Nato assault, Solar fire deluxe, Austerlitz, Waterloo and others for the Spectrum 128 on tape Linus Staeffler, Postenweg 24 3452 Kirchbrak, West Germany

DOES ANYONE Have a copy of way of the exploding fist for the call? Write to K Evans, 125 Edmund Street Birmingham

HELP NEEDED in loom + amiga contacts wanted Frank van den Steen, Kerkhofstraat 24, 9340 Smetlede, Belgium

Help needed for maze in Larry 3 IBM Format Can Supply help for various other PC titles will also swap

COMMODORE C64 required urgently vitally important Willing to pay £300 Contact Lalit Swami Tel: 0753-72760 DO NOT DELAY

HELP NEEDED on Amiga versions of R-Type Castle Master and New Zealand Story Please state in reply if rerly

NOTICE!

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FREEBIES

Mark Smiddy casts a watchful eye over the wide world of Public Domain software and finds from little oranges. . . giant games doth grow.

Mandarin's *STOS* has been well received in some quarters and criticised in others; in both cases with good reason. But this article is not about tearing strips off *STOS* (or *AMOS*) – it's about what programmers have been up to. Since the proof of the pudding is in the eating – spoons at the ready – let's discover if STOS and AMOS really are what they're cracked up to be. Or are they just a test vehicle for prototyping games?

LAND AHOY...

"Well shiver me timbers matey, that salty ole pirate, Captain Blackhook has gorn oft an lost his treasure map. Ee's managed to find the island where 'ee buried it alright, but now the crew are threatening a mutiny if 'ee doesn't come up with the goods – and pretty quick too! Why only last night, one could 'ear the sound of sharpening cutlasses, plotting on the poop deck, grumbling in the galley and murmurs by the mainsail."

That about sums up the level of intellect required to play *Treasure Search* (ST and Amiga, public domain) but is it a proliferation of Pugwash or just a load of old hogwash? To be honest, and although I hate to admit it, this kiddies game is great fun. The idea is simple enough, one or two players have to locate the treasure on a fictional 10 x 10 Km island paradise.

Keeping things as straightforward as possible it only has two levels of difficulty – easy (unlimited moves) or hard (limited moves). There's also an optional hint system – more of that in a moment. After the player(s) have made their choice, the game starts with a grid map and the captain asking where they think the treasure lies. Two numbers have to be entered – the number of Kms to move from East to West; and similarly along the North-South line. Then, a little pair of feet tramp along to the selected location and search for hidden treasure.

Unless the player locates the treasure, the ole sea dog booms, "There's no treasure here, shipmate!" This is usually accompanied by one of several pictures depicting where the captain is: being pursued by a bear; looking into a lion's mouth; about to become a native's main course; even underwater – with appropriate gurgling sound FX.

WE WANT YOU

Whadya mean, "my PD Library/ game hasn't been included!" Don't just sit there and complain. Write to the author, Co. ACE at the usual address, marking your envelope in LARGE LETTERS "PINK PAGES PD". Disks cannot be returned – but what's the price of a disk compared to coverage in ACE?

SHAMELESS PLUG

CHIPS of Middlesbrough would like you to know about their "Megadrive" competition. Every customer spending something gets a raffle ticket and the draw is made at the end of trading every Saturday. This competition is running up until Christmas. They can be contacted on 0642 219139.

If the hint system is active, the program tells the player how many Kms they are away from the treasure. This is especially useful for young minds to help with an appreciation of 2D spatial coordination and distancing.

At the end of the game, the player either gets the reward of the captain's greedy voice shouting "You've found my treasure" or a sight of the crew finally losing faith and making the poor guy walk the plank. The graphics are clear and colourful and the sound effects amusing. For little more than the price of a disk, this PD offering certainly doesn't show the real power of STOS & AMOS, but should provide hours of perplexing but pretty basic fun for juveniles of any age. Price: £2.95 (ST) or £3.45 (Amiga).

ROLL 'EM

Giving a description of *Poker Dice* (ST only) would not do it any favours – it just has to be seen (and heard) to be believed. Apart from being a great little game to while away the odd half-hour, from the title screen to the desktop – it's a beautifully designed and brilliantly thought-out implementation. For those who have never played poker dice before here's a quick review of the game.

In essence the game is a simplification of the classic card game, Poker. In Poker you have 52 cards and each player receives five. From this, each attempts to collect cards making up sequences: two kings and three aces; two pairs; numerical run and so on. Poker dice works in the same way but since a die only has six faces, only six "cards" are possible: nine, ten, Jack, Queen, King and Ace. This simplifies the game considerably because there are no suits to confuse matters.

What gives this ostensibly simple game the massive edge is the level of perfectionism the author has instilled in the graphics and sound. The title page is a digitised image of night-time Las Vegas accompanied by some raucous digitised music. Clicking the mouse takes the players to the control screen where you decide how many human players will play. Up to five players can partake in any one game with any mix of humans and computer. With zero human players the game enters a simulation mode.

The real treat comes as gameplay starts. A lovely little sampled croupier shouts, "Next" and one of a set of doors behind the playing area opens and a die spins out in perspective 3D that wouldn't look out of place in *Starglider 2*. The next four dice spin out in a similar fashion, each accompanied by a satisfying "swish". Click on the dice to hold and a gold label drops from behind with another sampled "clang". So it goes on until the round finishes.

Poker Dice plays an average but satisfying version of the game – not impossible to beat, but not too easy. However, gameplay is not what *Poker Dice* is really about – if ever there was a beautiful demo of what can be done in *STOS*, this is it. The graphics and sound are really impressive – suffice to say, if the Bitmap Bros. (*Speedball*, *Xenon* etc.) had written *Poker Dice*, it would probably look like this. This deserves to be in every collection: at £2.95, it ought to be!

THE LAST WORD

Which brings me to the reason why this month's round up almost didn't make it. Publishing deadlines? Don't you believe it – courtesy of Satsuma Software came a game which was so addictive I had be surgically removed from the ST! What's it called? *Plumb Crazy* – and no prizes for guessing what it's based on. Full review next month. This selection came courtesy of Sandra Sharkey's AMOS PD Library.

Sandra is one of the recognised distributors of the licenceware games mentioned, this ensures the extra charge levied on those programs is given directly to the author. Her address is: Sandra Sharkey, The AMOS PD Library, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs. WN6 7AA. Tel: (0942) 495261.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA MICROMANNICA

Here it is...a list of those vital topics that every up-market gamester needs to have at his command. Just because you thrashed the host at two-player *Tetris* doesn't mean you'll be the star of the party. No chum, you need know-how. And here's where to find it....

Each entry has a brief explanation, followed by a reference to an issue, so that you can hunt down the full lucid, in-depth, ACE assessment.

If, however, you missed an issue because you were abroad on a covert SAS operation, or nursing a sick relative in Botswana, or some other unlikely excuse, fret no longer. Back issues are available for all issues from ACE 4 inclusive (except ACE 11) at the giveaway price of £2.50 each in the UK and £3.50 each for overseas. These prices include post and packaging (surface mail). Overseas readers wanting airmail delivery should enquire as to the cost at the address below, listing the issues required.

To order, clearly list the required issue numbers and send them, along with your full name and address and a cheque or postal order for the full payment made payable to ACE magazine, to:

ACE Back Issues, PO Box 500, Leicester LE99 6AA.

ACE Back Issues can expand your collection – and your mind. Here's a checklist of topics covered in previous mags...

• **ASAT (AVIONICS SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TRAINER)**, combat flight simulator for the US Air Force by Perceptronics. Uses Falcon software by Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft. Features include: networking for multi-player action, tactile feedback and fingertip weapon selection. [ACE14]

• **BATMAN DIGITAL JUSTICE** is the world's first interactive hypercomic by Pepe Moreno. "Digital is the art medium of the future." [ACE30]

• **BATTLETECH,** "the world's first complete computer simulation for play", featuring multi-player cockpits equipped with 40Mhz 16 million colour graphics processors, stereo spatial sound and lifelike controls as you command 31st century Mechs. [ACE28]

• **BIT BOPPER**, the world's first total audio-visual entertainment system by Technation. Alex Blok's cyberscratch bit-tripper packs twin 32-bit decks, Sony erasable optical disc and custom-made video samplers. [ACE19]

• **CD-I** (Compact Disc Interactive) is destined to become the entertainment and education medium of the 90's. [ACE9/21/22/24/32/33/35]. Check out Issue 30 for multi-media principles (hypermedia in particular) and issue 24 for a preview of the Philips CD-I system.

• **CDTV,** Commodore's attempt to bring multi-media to the mass-market. An Amiga with built-in CD-ROM drive and CD-audio capability, redesigned to look like a VCR. [ACE34]

• **COSMIC OSMO,** the world's first hypergame - courtesy of Cyan Software/Activision. Check out issue 23 for the first review, issue 24 for a feature on hypergames, and issue 30 for general hypermdia coverage. New Osmo CD-ROM version featured in issue 36.

• **FLARE TECHNOLOGY**, trio of talented Cambridge-based games hardware engineers. Their custom-designed Flare One micro formed the basis of the Konix console. [ACE11]

• **FUJITSU FM TOWNS**, a 32-bit 16 million colour computer with built-in CD-ROM drive. If you bought ACE 31 you could have won one! [ACE27]

• **HYPERGAMES** like Cosmic Osmo and Batman Digital Justice are paving the way for CD-I entertainment. [ACE24/30]

• **INMOS FLIGHT SIMULATOR**, the world's first multi-player Transputer game running at 23 frames per second on 11 Transputers. [ACE7]

• **INTEGRATED FLIGHT AND ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES SYSTEM**, Plessey's answer to boring plane journeys - video games displayed on the seat in front of you. [ACE25]

• **INTERACTIVE VIDEO TAPE**, an alternative to CD-I. [ACE26]

• **KONIX CONSOLE**, a powerful British console with revolutionary built-in joystick controller which could change into a steering wheel, motorbike handle or aeroplane yoke. Ultimately failed due to a lack of marketing money. Rumours suggest a new buyer is interested. [ACE18/25]

• **LIGHTSPEED SPRITES**, three researchers from Carnegie Mellon University, USA have developed an algorithm enabling them to generate graphical simulations of objects seen travelling at 99% of the speed of light. [ACE34]

• **MEDIA LAB**, Boston-based research institute with one simple brief - invent the future. People at this Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) facility are working on computer generated holograms, interactive computer newspapers and virtual reality man-machine interfaces. [ACE9]

• **NEO-GEO**, a new home- and arcade-based games console from SNK in Japan, with storage capacity for 64Mb games cartridges and IC card capability. ACE gave you an exclusive chance to win one in issue 34. [ACE32/34]

• **POPULOUS**, highly invluential 963 ACE-Rated arcade strategy game by Bullfrog/Electronic Arts. [ACE18/19]

• **RENDERMAN**, the unique 3D graphics system by Pixar which creates polygons with photorealistic detail. [ACE35]

• **TURBOEXPRESS,** currently the best colour handheld console - a portable version of the NEC PC Engine, fully compatible with existing games cartridges. [ACE35]

GAMESBUSTING WITH TNT BACK ISSUES

Due to shortage of space, we've had to postpone our mega-TNT guide until next month. Apologies to all concerned. Meanwhile, if you're looking for solutions, here's a reminder of the games we've carried in recent months.

ISSUE 29
Dungeon Master Guide (part one) - Les Rigden
AD&D and *Bard's Tale* - Colin Taylor
Batman- the Movie - Adam Morley

ISSUE 30
Dungeon Master Guide (part two)

ISSUE 31
Space Ace - David Williams and Chris West
Dungeon Master Guide (part three)
Future Wars - Phil Thompson

ISSUE 32
Dungeon Master Guide (part four, final part)
Complete guide to *Y's* - Jojo Cicero and Mark Cook

ISSUE 33
No guides or solutions, but loads of shorties

ISSUE 34
Castle Master - Incentive
Midwinter - Microprose
Guide to hacking on the C64 (part one) - Jon

ISSUE 35
Drakkhen Guide (part one) - Adam Morley
Xenomorph (part one) - Alan Coates
Guide to hacking on the C64 (part two)

ISSUE 36
Defender of the Crown (mini players guide) - Paul Thomas
Lots of shorties

ISSUE 37
Drakkhen (part two)
Xenomorph (part two)
Guide to hacking on C64 (part three)
The ACE guide to solutions.

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the BLITTER end

GAMEBOY BONUS!

By the time you've read this snippet, you'll either be patting yourself on the back or cursing your luck. Here's why...

On page 33 of the last issue there was a Mystery Bonus Voucher for you to use with this month's cover mounted gift. If you were clever enough to cut it out and keep it, you could, if you're one of the winners, be rewarded not only with a free Game Boy but **ALSO** with **£100** of Game Boy software. Yessir! All you have to do is stick that voucher on your entry and if you're one of the winners, you'll strike EXTRA lucky!

GAZZA II

Yay! Blitter is proud to take the final step in offering you the chance to Meet Gazza. Here's the second instalment of Entertainment Interantional/Empire's great comp, where one lucky reader will get the chance to meet the man in person.

Having successfully identified the two Entertainment International products on page 30 of Issue 38, write your answers down (on a postcard only please), along with the answer to this third and final question.

● *Which mutant comic character have Empire recently acquired the licence to, and are shortly to be releasing a game about?*

The answer (if you're flummoxed) is in this issue. Send the answer along with the original two plus your name, address, and daytime phone number (if possible) to: ACE GAZZA COMP, Box 2, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Make sure you read the rules in the panel at the bottom left hand of the page before sending in your entry.

In correction of our provisional title in last month's Gazza feature, we can now reveal that although provisionally entitled *Gazza's Super Soccer*) the new game is going to be called (wait for it....) *Gazza 2*! Available on all formats in mid-November at £24.99 for 16-bit and GX4000 and £9.99/£14.99 for 8-bits. Empire have asked us to warn CPC owners that the GX4000 versions may appear before the other Amstrad ones. Sorry, cpchappies.

A spokeswoman for EI/Empire said "we believe that *Gazza 2* has 100% potential, and will compete happily against the likes of *Kick Off*."

GAZZA RULES

1. Deadline for entries is Thursday 6th December.
2. The winner will be the first correct entry drawn at random from the qualifying entries.
3. Unstamped or incorrectly addressed entries will not be eligible for entry.
4. Employees of EMAP Images or Entertainment International, or anyone involved in the manufacture, sale, or distribution of their products are not eligible for entry.

DON'T MISS OUT!

Use this form to reserve yourself a copy of next month's ACE...

DEAR NEWSAGENT,
As a sophisticated user of highly complex electronic equipment for entertainment purposes, I do hereby request and require you to ensure that I get my copy of ACE issue 40 – the January (Christmas) issue of Advanced Computer Entertainment, due out on Thursday 6th December 1990. I need you to reserve a copy because the ultimate games magazine is vital to my long-term games future...

My Name.....

My Address.....

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IT'S THE BIG ONE!

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE BIGGEST ISSUE OF ACE THIS YEAR...

☞ Hot Games for Cold Months

What games should you consider buying this Christmas? ACE checks-out the front runners in the race for the top Xmas spot.

We'll be taking a look at Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Robocop II, Total Recall, Line of Fire, Gazza II, Speedball II, Golden Axe, ESWAT, BAT, Champion of Raj, 4D-Boxing, Wrath of the Demon, Narc, Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe, Nebulus II, and lots more for all the major micros – plus Pipe Dream (Gameboy), Strider (Megadrive), Days of Thunder (Nintendo Entertainment System) and the latest in CD-entertainment.

Find out what we think of the Christmas '90 games releases in the next bumper issue of ACE.

☞ The Future of 'Intertainment'... Now

Next month ACE is bringing you exclusive on-the-spot reports from the Intertainment '90, the 3rd Annual Conference on Interactive Entertainment just held at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York, USA.

Speakers at the conference include key personnel from Origin, Lucasfilm Games, Sierra On-Line, Cinemaware, Mediagenic (Activision), MTV, Magnetic Scrolls, American Interactive Media (Philips), ABC, Time-Life, NEC, Mattel, Mitsubishi, Children's Television Workshop (Sesame Street), AT&T and, of course, ACE.

What are the New Gaming Worlds? Will you be experiencing 'Adventures in Cyberspace' in the next few years? How and where will interactive entertainment fit-in with such technologies as HDTV, holography and digital television? What is Hyperfiction? Are companies maximising the impact of interactive entertainment with floppy disk adverts, sponsorship of video games, on-line ads and interactive TV advertising?

Will the 90's become the 'Decade of Interactive Entertainment'? The only sure way to find out is to buy the next issue of ACE.

☞ Happy New Year!

ACE is giving away a FREE 1991 Wall Planner Poster next month.

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ACE is the only magazine in the world with dedicated review sections for computer, console and compact disc entertainment.

Don't forget ACE is the essential buyers guide to games software and hardware. Hot off the Shelf gives you the low-down on the latest ACE games available in your local software retailer. While ACE Classics reminds you of the greatest games of all-time. ACE Buyers Guides... the facts not the fiction, every month. It's simply ACE!

OOOPS!

Last month's Terran Envoy details should have read: Amiga/PC versions cost £24.99 (out now). There will not be an ST version and no other versions are planned. Our apologies to all concerned.

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CHASE HQ II
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